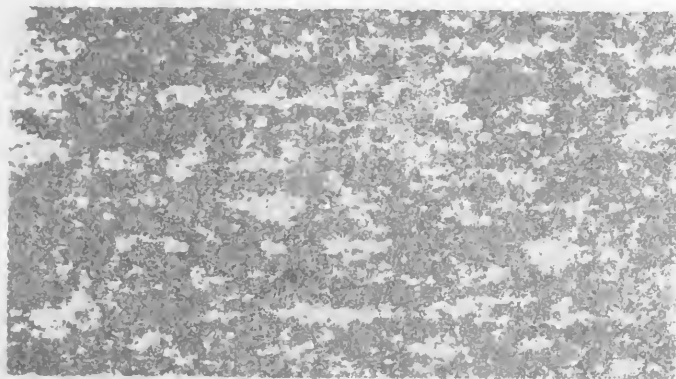
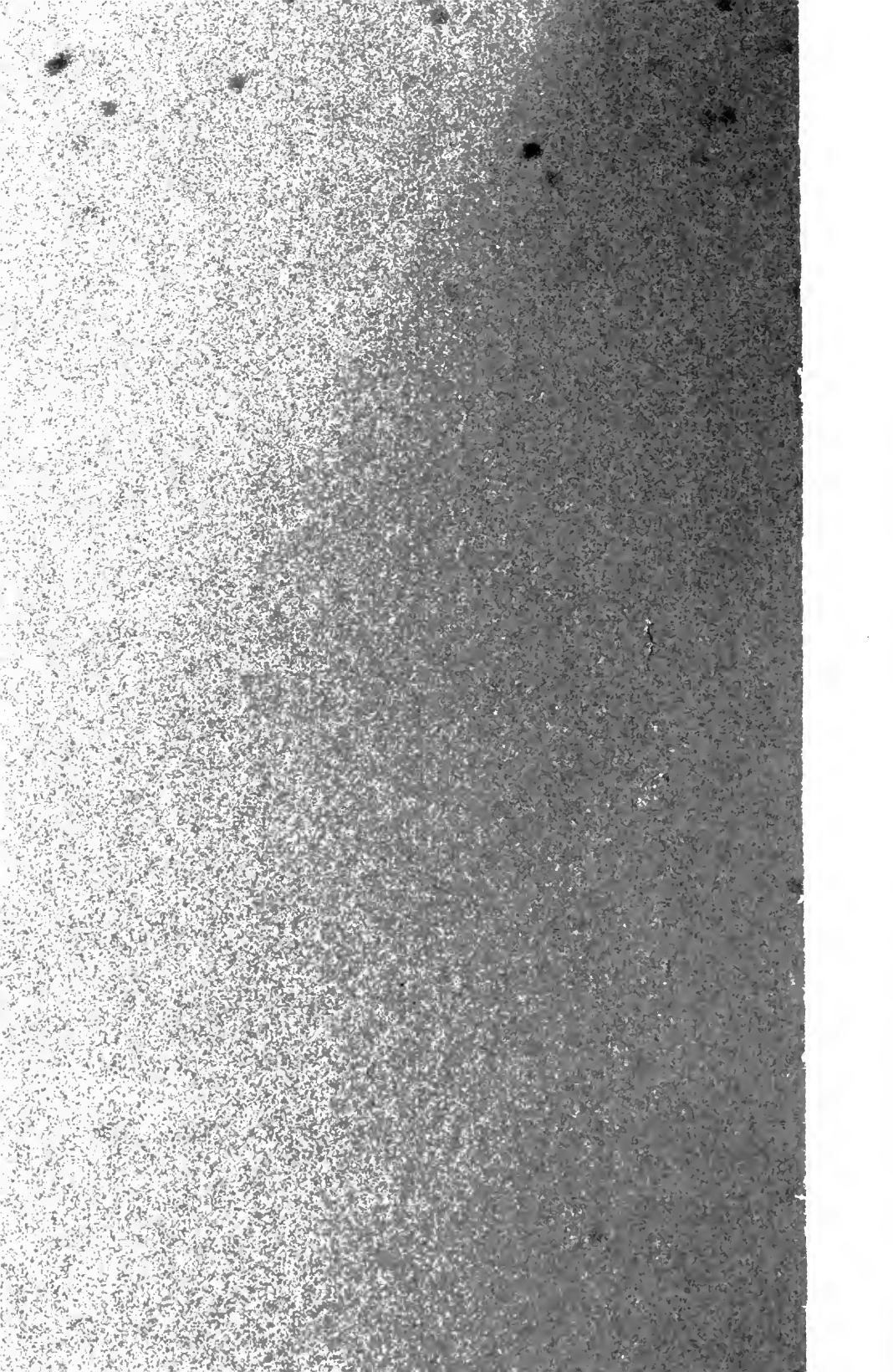




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THE
FAMILY DOCTOR;

OR,

MRS. BARRY AND HER BOURBON.

"O thou invisible Spirit of Wine, if thou hast no name to be called by,
let us call thee—*Devil*."



BOSTON:—PUBLISHED BY HENRY HOYT,
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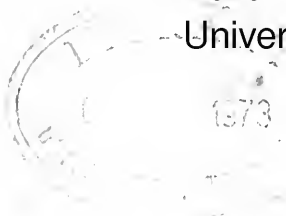
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THE FAMILY DOCTOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE OVER-BURDENED HEART.

"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break."

Shakespeare.

"I want my supper," said Johnny. Mother laid aside her work, and, from the low window where she sat, looked anxiously down the street.

"Don't wait, mother; I know he isn't coming, and I am so hungry!" pleaded the child.

She rose from her seat without saying a word. It was one of her hard days, and she looked so pale and sad, as she went about getting supper, that it made my heart ache.

We had finished eating when father came in. Mother did not raise her eyes; but I was glad to see that he was sober.

"You might have waited for me," he said, as he took the cup of tea she offered. "You know I hate to eat my victuals alone."

"We wait a great many nights for you, and you don't come," said my little brother.

I thought Johnny would get a sharp answer for this; but father laughed, and said, "Well, never mind, Johnny; I am coming home to supper every night now. And, Martha, don't look so glum. I have my old place in the shop again, and I mean to keep it this time."

"Till you earn enough for another spree," said my mother without looking up.

"O mother!" I said.

"I tell you, I mean to keep it!" he repeated, without seeming to notice what she said. "I can have steady work all winter, and Lizzie shall go to school another quarter, and Johnny shall have his skates, and we'll have the old times back again. Hey, wife?"

"I don't want to hear any such promises," said my mother. "You make them one day and break them the next."

"O mother!"

"Isn't it true?" she said, sharply. "How many times has he promised never to touch liquor again, and broken his promise in a week? Lizzie, it's no use saying, 'O mother!' I am tired of keeping still. I have covered up, and smoothed over, and hid away, till my heart is ready to break; and I must talk it out, or I shall die. 'Old times back again!' I have been thinking all day, sit-

ting here in my misery and rags, with hardly food enough in the house to keep my children from starving, of the old times when I was a happy, light-hearted girl, in the little red farmhouse. You took me from that dear old home, and you squandered the money my father and mother worked so hard in their old age to lay up for their only child. You brought the curse of drunkenness under this roof before we were six months married. You went down, step by step, dragging your wife and children with you; and you talk about *old times*! What would my mother say to see me to-day? Mother! mother! I am glad you are dead." She covered her face with her apron.

"Will you hold your tongue?" said father, angrily. "How dare you talk so before the children?"

"And why not before the children?" she said with great bitterness. "Don't they know it all? What have they seen under this roof but poverty, and misery, and sin? I would rather that boy"—pointing to Johnny, who, with round eyes, looked from one to the other of his parents—"lay in his coffin to-night, than see him live to grow up to be a man, if he must be what his father is."

He snatched his hat from the table with a fierce oath, and slammed the door as he went out.

"Now, mother," said Johnny, "he's gone to 'The Corners' again, and when he comes home—"

"Hush, Johnny," I said; and, waking little Annie from her sound sleep in the cradle, I hurried the children up stairs, but all the time I was undressing and putting them to bed, and long afterwards, when the supper things were put away, and we sat down with our one candle on the little table between us, to finish the shirts that must be taken home to-morrow, I was wondering what had come over mother. For never, in all my life, had I heard her talk as she talked to father that night. In thinking it over then, I was glad to remember, and, after what followed so soon, I am glad to remember now, that I never heard her speak bitterly and reproachfully to him before. Silent and sad she was, a woman of a sorrowful spirit always, through those miserable years, but patient and forbearing, and untiring in her care for his comfort. I speak of this because, though I must tell my sad story, I wish to do my mother justice. Even at the worst, when drink made

him furious, and he filled our poor home with terror and violence, her patience never failed; and in the illnesses he brought upon himself, she nursed him as carefully and tenderly as if he had been the best of husbands. I used to wonder sometimes—for I was of the age when girls have their fancies about such things—if she loved him as tappy wives love their husbands; if, seeing him so changed and degraded, she could keep in her heart any of the feeling of her wedding day. Does St. Paul's command, "Wives, reverence your husbands," apply to drunkards' wives?

But I must not forget that I am speaking of my father. Certainly, until that dreadful night, my dear mother never forgot, disappointed and heart-broken as she was, to render him all the outward respect due to the father of her children. Poor mother! I looked at her, as she bent over her work, her eyes red with crying, and longed to comfort her. I think she kept her troubles too much to herself. The neighbors called her hard and proud, because in our greatest distress she never asked for pity or aid. But, strong and self-reliant as her nature was, I knew there were times when her heart ached for human sympathy. Alas! she felt the need of no higher aid. In all her trouble, she had never learned to go and tell Jesus. When a few months before, on that bright Sabbath afternoon which I shall never forget, I came to her with my new-found hope, she kissed me, and said she was glad; if religion could make me happy, I did well to get it; for I needed comfort enough. But when I ventured to say, "And you too, mother," she repulsed me so sternly that I had never dared to speak to her on the subject again. But, looking at her to-night, and seeing how trouble was making hollows in her cheek, and streaking her black hair with gray, I prayed earnestly that God would comfort her as only He can comfort.

And then I began to think of the future! O, if father would but keep his promise, and send me to the Academy through the winter, I felt sure that, with hard study, I should be ready to teach in the spring, and so be a help instead of a burden, to the family. And the hours passed, and it was nearly midnight before our work was finished. But tired as I was, I stood a few moments at the open window of my little room up stairs. It was a still, moonlight night. I could hear the ripple of the stream that crossed the road a few rods from our door, and see in the water the shadow of the willow-tree just at the end of the bridge. Father was so often away till near morning that his absence did not disturb me; but before I fell asleep, I heard the front door open, and knew that mother was looking out into the night, and listening for his step.

It seemed to me I had slept but a few minutes, when a dreadful cry broke the stillness. I sprang to my feet. It was broad day. As

I hurried on my clothes I heard a confused sound of voices below; but the cry did not come again. Surely it was mother's voice I heard; and now all was still. Had he murdered her? Fear gave me strength, and I was down stairs in an instant. My first glance showed me two or three neighbors standing near the open door, and my mother kneeling beside something in the middle of the room. My next glance told me what that something was. O father, had it come to this? He was quite dead. They found him lying at the bottom of the stream that ran almost past his door. Had he called out, we must have heard him. Had he made one effort to save himself, he must have succeeded, for the stream ran but four feet deep in its channel. One of our neighbors, driving his team across the bridge in the early morning, saw, through the clear water, the body of a man lying under the willow-tree, whose shadow I watched the night before. He went back for help, and they did what they could; but it was too late, the doctor said, by several hours. The farmer's empty cart stood by the roadside, and so they brought him home. Home? It was home last night. He was here among us, eating, talking, sharing our common wants. So close to us then, so far away now!

Since the first outburst of grief, my mother had not spoken; but when I knelt beside her and put my arms about her neck, she whispered, "O Lizzie, I was unkind to him last night," and broke forth into dreadful crying.

Poor mother! After all these years of silent endurance, why must she falter at the last, and make this hour of bereavement bitter with the anguish of self-reproach? O, to bring him back for one hour; to recall the cruel words; to throw herself at his feet, and beg to be forgiven! Too late! Neither to-day, nor to-morrow, nor next year. He has gone too far away for her ever to find him again.

CHAPTER II.

GIVING AWAY THE BABY.

"Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;
Then have I reason to be fond of grief."
Shakespeare.

The day after the funeral we resumed the routine of our every-day life. Our low room bore its accustomed look, for the seats borrowed from a neighbor for the occasion were returned, and only a certain stillness and chill remained to tell us how lately Death had filled it with his presence. I think the children felt this; for they played out of doors all the

morning, though it was cold. Mother and I sat sewing in our usual places, and my youngest brother, or "Baby Willie," as we always called him, a beautiful child, fourteen months old, was playing about the floor, when Johnny ran in, his black eyes open to their widest extent.

"Mother, the Clair carriage has stopped right before our house, and a beautiful lady is getting out. I guess she's coming in;" and as he spoke there was a knock at the door.

The Clairs were wealthy people, living in the neighborhood, whose carriage often swept past our humble abode, but had never stopped there before.

What brought it to-day? My heart sank as I guessed the lady's errand. Poor as we were, one possession of ours that rich woman coveted.

One morning in the summer, as I was drawing Baby Willie in his carriage, Mrs Clair stopped me at her gate. She seemed greatly taken with the child; inquired his name and age, and lifting him from the carriage, held him in her arms. He was a fearless little fellow, and he laughed and frolicked, and hid his curly head in her bosom. She held him close to her heart, kissed him a great many times, and, when at last he grew restless in her embrace, she reluctantly gave him back to me; but there were tears in her eyes, and a hungry, longing look on her face. She lived in a great, splendid house on the hill; but she was childless, and the moment she entered our poor room I knew she came to beg away our baby.

And I was right. After a few commonplace expressions of sympathy, she coaxed Willie to come to her. He was pleased with the glitter of her ornaments and the rustle of her silk dress, and lifted his blue eyes to her face in baby wonderment. She stroked his curls with her jeweled hand, and turning to my mother, said:—

"Mrs Barton, will you give this child to me?"

My mother looked at her in amazement.

"Give my baby to you?" she said.

"Yes. I have been thinking, ever since I heard of your affliction, what you can do, left as you are with so many little mouths to feed. I shall be glad to help you, by relieving you of the burden of this child."

"I never looked upon my children as burdens," said my mother, her lip beginning to quiver.

"O, no, of course not," she replied. "You quite misunderstand me. I have no doubt you find it a pleasure to do for them to the extent of your ability; but—you will pardon me, Mrs. Barton, if I speak plainly—you are left, if I am rightly informed, in quite a destitute condition, with three children, all of them of a tender age, dependent upon you; that is with the little help this young girl can

give you. You found it hard enough to live before: how do you expect to support yourself and all this family alone? Now, let me tell you what I am willing to do. Give me this boy, the most helpless and dependent of all, and from this hour he shall be to me as my own child. He shall share every comfort and luxury our house affords. He shall have the best advantages for his education, and, if he lives to be of age, we will start him in any business or profession he may choose. I have my husband's word for this, and at our death he shall be well provided for. Indeed, I may say that we will make him our principal heir for we have no near relatives living, and he shall be to us in every respect as our own child. What more can you ask for the boy?"

All the time she was speaking, her hands softly touched the golden curls, and his baby eyes were fastened on her face.

My mother made no reply, and it was impossible to read the expression of her face.

"Surely" said the lady, a little impatiently, after waiting a moment for a reply, "if you love the boy, you cannot hesitate an instant. I should think it need not take you long to choose between the life I offer him and—" her keen eye swept our bare room with a look it needed no words to interpret.

Just here Baby Willie slid from his place on her lap, and went toddling across the room to his mother. She caught him in her arms, hid her face in his neck, and sobbed out, "O Willie! Willie!"

"Don't decide now, mother" I said. "Mrs Clair, give her time to think about it."

"Certainly," she said "if you wish it. Shall I call in the morning? And, Lizzie,—I think they said your name was Lizzie,—you appear like a good, practical, common-sense girl. Don't let any foolish sensibility interfere with your brother's prospects. I am sure I may trust you to give your influence towards a right decision."

She turned to my baby brother, as though she would have taken him in her arms again; but my mother held him fast. Then she trailed her silk dress through the doorway, and we heard her carriage drive away.

Mother went immediately to her room, taking Willie with her, and I was left to think over Mrs. Clair's proposal alone. With a heavy heart I acknowledged the truth of all she said. I knew she was abundantly able to do what she promised, and that, as her adopted son, my brother would receive every advantage that money and position could give him. What had we to offer in comparison to this? I thought of our poverty and humble station; the struggle we must make to live; the years of hardship and toil before us; and I felt the full force of the lady's appeal. But how could we give up Willie?

We said little about it. I felt it was a question my mother must decide alone; and I needed only to look in her face to know the

struggle within, and how it was likely to end. When she sent me early next morning to her bureau drawer, to bring Baby Willie's only white frock, I knew our darling was to be given away. She washed and dressed him herself, lingering over each detail, twining the soft curls round her fingers again and again, and kissing the dimpled shoulders as she tied the blue ribbons.

When the carriage drove to the door, she gave him to me without a word. I did not wait for Mrs. Clair to alight, but ran down to her to the gate, Willie laughing and crowing in my arms.

She was in high good humor; and, after wrapping the child in a rich embroidered mantle brought for the purpose, she leaned over the side of the carriage and spoke very graciously to me.

"I heard of a situation for you, Lizzie," she said. "My friend Mrs. Barry, who is an invalid, wants a girl to wait on her, and do plain sewing. I have described you to her, and she thinks you will suit her. It is an easy place with good wages, and you will be near your mother. If you wish the situation, you must apply to-day."

I thanked her, and she drove off.

"Why not?" I asked myself, as I walked back to the house. My plan of teaching must be given up—that was certain. It was equally certain that I must do something towards the support of the family. Why not this? "Good pay, and near my mother." Before I reached the house, I made up my mind to apply for the situation, if my mother gave her consent. 'This was not difficult to obtain; so completely absorbed was she in her grief at the loss of her baby that she scarcely heeded me, and when at length she understood, only said, "Yes, child; go, if you wish. There's nothing but death and separation now."

In half an hour I was on my way to Mrs. Barry's.

The uncomfortable shyness I felt as I climbed the broad stone steps leading to the mansion wore off directly in the presence of Mrs. Barry. She was so perfectly quiet and ladylike in her manner as at once to put me at my ease; and as I could answer her few questions satisfactorily, our business was soon concluded, and I left the house with a light heart.

Half way down the hill Frank Stanley overtook me. "Why, Lizzie, what a chase you have given me!" he said, coming up quite out of breath. "What in the world are you doing up here? I saw some one come out of Mr. Barry's gate that looked so much like you that I hurried to catch up; and a pretty chase you have given me. But I can't imagine what you could go there for."

"To apply for a situation Frank. I am going there to live next Monday."

"Apply for a situation," Lizzie!" he repeated. "What kind of a situation?"

"To sew, and take care of Mrs. Barry. She is not well, you know."

"O Lizzie, I thought you were to teach."

"So I did; but that is out of the question, now, you know, and I must do something to help mother."

"Seems to me this is very sudden," said Frank, in a discontented tone. "What do you want to go there for? They are proud, snobbish people; at least he is—wonderfully set up, because he has made money. I don't believe they will be good to you, Lizzie. They will look down on you, and treat you like a common servant."

"Well, that is just what I shall be," I said, laughing. "What makes you think they are proud? Mrs. Barry did not seem in the least like it, only very quiet and ladylike; and she has one of the sweetest faces I ever saw. I am sure I shall love her. And, O Frank, if you could see her beautiful room, with its birds, and flowers, and pictures, where I am to sit most of the time, you would be glad, I know, that I am to have such a pleasant home. Think how much nicer it will be than to work all day in a dirty factory."

"I don't want you in either place," he said.

"I hate rich people. Now, there's Phil Barry. He comes into the store with his fancy coat and diamond studs, and gives himself the most disagreeable airs, and treats us clerks as though we weren't good enough to speak to. The fellow don't know anything—he is almost a fool; but because his father is rich, he feels mighty grand. And I suppose the rest are just like him. Lizzie, I think you might have talked it over with me before you decided."

Because Frank and I had known each other all our lives, and walked, and studied, and played together ever since we were little children, he seemed to think he had a right to be consulted in all my plans.

"You know I couldn't wait, Frank," I said. "I must decide at once, or lose the chance. And really it is the best thing I can do. And I wonder why it isn't just as respectable for me to take care of that gentle, pretty lady, and use my needle, as it is for you to stand behind the counter all day, waiting on Tom Dick, and Harry, or carry big bundles all over town, as you are doing to-day. Come, Frank, don't be cross; and pray don't walk any farther with me. It really is not respectable for you to be seen walking with a 'common servant.'"

Frank laughed then, and made a silly speech, which it is not worth while to repeat.

It was sad to go home and find no Willie there. The house seemed strangely hushed and vacant. "Is Willie dead too, mother?" said Johnny, when she snatched a little worn shoe from the floor, and, kissing it passionately, hid it in her bosom. When night came I could not bear to look at his empty cradle.

Just at twilight, going to mother's room, I found her tying her bonnet.

"Where are you going, mother?"

"I am going for my baby," she said, almost fiercely.

"Why, mother!" I spoke with astonishment, for it was very unlike her to change her mind so suddenly.

"O Lizzie, I can't help it. Perhaps it is selfish and wicked; but I must have my baby. If God had taken him from me, I would try to submit. I know I should not mourn for him so much if he was dead. He has seemed dead, and worse than dead, to me all day. He is mine, and I will have him back"

I knew her too well to utter a word of remonstrance. She was like "a bear robbed of her whelps."

"I will go with you," I said, and in a few minutes we were on our way.

She walked so fast, that I found it impossible, young and strong as I was, to keep pace with her; but before we reached the house she waited for me to come up.

"There; listen," she said. "Don't you hear him crying? That sound has been in my ears all day. Poor baby! He wants me as much as I want him. O Willie! Willie!"

With the utmost attention I could not, at that distance, distinguish a sound; but as we came nearer I heard a child screaming, and very soon knew it to be Willie's voice. We followed the direction of the sound, going round to the side door. Mother knocked once, and, without waiting an instant, opened the door and entered. The carpet was strewn with playthings. A girl sat in a low rocking-chair, with Willie kicking and struggling in her arms, and Mrs. Clair, on her knees before him, vainly endeavoring to pacify the screaming child.

Without a word, mother took him from the arms of his astonished nurse. He stopped crying, looked at her, his blue eyes swimming in tears; then one arm crept round her neck, and the little weary head sank on her shoulder in perfect content. She held him close to her heart, lavishing upon him every tender epithet in a mother's language.

"What does this mean?" said Mrs. Clair, rising quickly to her feet. "You have given the child to me."

"O Mrs. Clair, I want my baby," said my mother. "Indeed I cannot give him up. God would have given him to you, if He had meant you should have him. He gave you your splendid house, and your carriage, and your fine clothes; but He gave me my children, and I cannot part with them till He takes them from me."

"Are you crazy?" said Mrs. Clair.

"I was crazy when I parted with my child," said my mother.

"O, very well," said the lady, bitterly; "take the boy back to your miserable home; and, if he lives to be a man, he will curse his

mother for her selfishness. And don't come to me for help. I have done with you. Go back, and all starve together."

"We shall not starve," said my mother, with great spirit. "I have a willing heart and a strong right arm. I can work for my children; I can die for them, if need be; but I will not part with them till God bids me. And, please God, I shall live to see this baby hand my staff and my stay. Come, Lizzie." She wrapped her shawl about the sleeping boy, and we left the house.

CHAP. III.

THE DOCTOR AND HIS MEDICINE.

"A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;
One whom the music of his own tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony."
Shakespeare.

My mother's determined spirit was roused. She spoke truly when she told Mrs. Clair that she had a willing heart and a strong right arm. And she needed them both. There were years of toil and privation before her; for, with three little hungry mouths to feed, she was left very poor. But she looked at everything from a hopeful point of view.

"We shall have no rent to pay, Lizzie," she said. "The house, poor as it is, is my own; dear father looked out for that. Then we can live very snug. And you know how quick I am with my needle; and I can get plenty of work, and with what you can spare from your wages, we shall do nicely. It is a great comfort to me to think that you will have a pleasant, comfortable home."

"Mother," I said, "do you know much about the Farrys? Frank says they are very proud people."

"Quite likely, my dear. Mrs. Barry belongs to a wealthy, aristocratic family. I know it was thought she married beneath her, because Mr. Barry's father was a mechanic. But it was a love match. He was a fine-looking young man, and she was called the belle of Hartford County. She was very beautiful when she was a girl."

"Mother, she is a beautiful woman now. I don't believe she could ever have been more so. She has the loveliest face I ever saw."

I spoke with girlish enthusiasm; but, looking back through many years, I see no reason to change my opinion, or to doubt the justice of the meed of praise I so freely bestowed upon her. I can see her now as she looked that bright Monday morning when I commenced my pleasant duties under her husband's roof. She was full forty years old, but her complexion was as delicate and transparent as a child's; above the medium height, but so perfectly

well proportioned, and so graceful in every movement, that no one thought of calling her tall. A quantity of rich brown hair, arranged in shining braids, formed a fitting coronet for her queenly head. Her eyes were large, and of a liquid brown; and she had the sweetest mouth I ever saw. In her luxuriantly furnished room, wrapped in the soft folds of her crimson morning-dress, her small white hands sparkling with gems, with all her beautiful surroundings, she looked to me, fresh from my poverty-stricken home, like a princess in a fairy tale. On the hearth-rug, in front of the blazing fire, sat a boy, eight or nine years old, busily whittling. He looked up from his work as I entered the room, and I saw that, with his mother's broad, open forehead, and clear brown eyes, he was yet undeniably homely. His hair was as rough as a lion's mane, his skin freckled, and his mouth large; and, when he ran to his mother for some advice about the miniature boat he was constructing, his great red knuckles contrasted strongly with her little delicate hand. He seemed very frank and confiding, and, before I was half an hour in the house, came to me to hem the sails for his ship. So we were good friends directly. His brother Philip I met on the stairs, when I went to my dinner. He stopped to let me pass, and stared at me with a pair of bold, handsome eyes, till I was glad to drop my own.

Mr. Barry was out of town, and, the first two or three weeks of my stay under his roof, I saw little of him; for his business, of which he only carried on a branch in the quiet country village where he resided, kept him much of the time in the neighboring city. He was a tall, erect man; his florid face unwrinkled, and with not a gray hair to mark his fifty winters; a little pompous in manner, but looking and appearing just what he was—the prosperous merchant.

One morning, when I had been with his wife two or three weeks, he stopped, hat in hand, at the door of her room.

"Clara," he said, "I believe I will step into Dr. Sharpe's office, and ask him to call round to-day. I think you have tried old Dr. Burton long enough; and they say this new doctor is very skilful. I understand he left a large practice in the city, and came out here, where he would not be obliged to work so hard. I should like to see if he can help you."

"Very well," said the lady, languidly. "Do as you please about it; but I have no idea he can do anything for me. I feel completely discouraged."

"Nonsense! You will be all right again. Now, don't worry. Tell him all your symptoms, and just how you feel. He has had great experience, and, I have no doubt, will understand your case at once."

"Lizzie, don't go away when he comes," said Mrs. Barry. "Take your work and sit

with me. The thought of seeing a new doctor makes me nervous."

I accordingly settled myself comfortably by the window, but almost immediately was called away by an urgent request for my help in the dining-room, from Katie, the second girl, who was disabled by a lame hand.

Before I finished, Sam ran in saying, "The doctor has come, Lizzie, and mother wants you up-stairs."

"I have very little strength, doctor," Mrs. Barry was saying when I entered the room; "the least exertion wearies me, and my sleep does me no good. I feel as tired in the morning as at night."

Dr. Sharpe ran his fingers through his stiff gray hair, making it stand out from his head in all directions. He was a little man, very learned and very pompous.

"The symptoms you describe, my dear madam," he replied, "are produced, no doubt, by a general prostration of the nervous system. The nervous system," said Dr. Sharpe, raising his voice, and looking all round, as though addressing quite an assembly, "that wonderful collection of medullary cords, originating from the brain and spinal marrow, and distributed upon the organs of sense, the viscera, vessels, muscles, and every part of this organism of ours, that is endowed with sensibility, has its own great law, and is governed thereby. We will call it a law of expenditure and supply. Among the delicate tissues of which this part of the body is composed, there is a constant waste going on, while fresh nervous force is supplied day by day to balance the expenditure. In a perfectly healthy, unfluctuating state of vital action, the supply greatly exceeds the expenditure; while in a less favorable condition of the system we shall find the expenditure exceeding the supply. Now, what is to be done? Food being the natural element—"

"But I have no appetite, doctor."

"Precisely, madam, because there is an abnormal state of the system, and every part of the sensitive organism suffers. The delicate lining of the mucous membrane of the stomach becomes irritated, the gastric juices vitiated, consequently anorexia, or loss of appetite, follows. The liver—What is the liver?" said Dr. Sharpe, turning round suddenly, and glaring fiercely at me through his spectacles.

I was so overwhelmed at the magnitude and extent of the question, that in my trepidation I upset my work-basket, and was too busy collecting my scattered utensils to reply.

"The liver," he resumed, keeping his eye sternly on me, "is an organ whose functions are closely connected with the very citadel of life. Look at the position it occupies, under the diaphragm, in the right hypochondrium, its smaller portion occupying part of the epigastric region. What does it do? It takes up any new matter which can be made

blood. It takes up any matter which can be used over again. It is the great economizer. It excretes the bile, a fluid of the utmost importance in chylification. If the liver is disordered, the whole system suffers. Nutrition is impaired. The vital force is diminished. Phlegmon or morbid heat is engendered, and the integrity of the entire organism destroyed."

He looked round when he had finished, as much as to say, "Would anybody like any further information about the liver?" and as nobody did, he settled himself on his chair, gave his head a great rub, and looked fiercer than ever.

"Do you think I have a liver complaint, doctor?" said Mrs. Barry, timidly.

"You have a slight functional derangement, my dear madam, accompanied by an inertia and torpidity of that important part of the vascular system which we shall find it desirable to arrest in time."

"Then these headaches, doctor, are very distressing. And I am dreadfully nervous. The shutting of a door makes me jump, and any sudden fright puts me in a profuse perspiration. And I have lost all confidence in myself; everything looks mountainous to me. I have no control over my feelings, but shed tears at the least little thing; and I have lost all interest in society, and only desire my friends to leave me here to mope. And half the time I am so dull and drowsy that I fall asleep in my chair."

"Mrs. Barry, you have described with great accuracy the effect of diseased action upon the nerves and brain. From the great nervous centres," said Dr. Sharpe, again addressing a large audience, "the lesser nerves radiate, as the lesser planets round the sun. And over all parts of the body extends this wonderful net-work. We have the dorsal nerves, the lumbar nerves, the cerebral nerves—Where," said the doctor, reflectively,—"where don't they go? And the lesser nerves acting from, and reacting upon, these great nervous centres, what follows? A slight disturbance here, and every nerve responds and sympathizes. We find, in place of calm, uniform action, an unnatural susceptibility, and a predisposition to spasmodic excitement. The excretories of the skin emit their fluids freely, the lachrymal gland pours forth its secretions; in short, there is abnormal action and excitement. The effect upon the cerebro-psychical organs enclosed in the viscus, or, in unprofessional language, the brain, is equally obvious. Here we find headache, accompanied by depression, taciturnity, and lethargy."

"And the palpitation of the heart, doctor—"

"Merely sympathetic, my dear madam; depend upon it. So important a primary organ situated in the thorax, where the arteries rise and the veins terminate, must participate in any disturbance of the system. The heart—" He looked my way again, and I felt so sure he

would call upon me for some information respecting that organ, that I made a hasty errand from the room. When I returned he had just finished a long speech, and was shampooing his head again.

"O doctor, you frighten me," said Mrs. Barry.

"My dear madam, allow me at once to reassure you. I detect in my diagnosis of your disease a train of symptoms not alarming in themselves, but suggestive of constitutional weakness and a want of vital power. There is, as I remarked, some functional derangement which it will be prudent to arrest, a somewhat morbid condition of the nervous centres, a torpid state of the liver, a slight, a very slight, sympathetic affection of the heart. Now, let us restore the nervous system to a healthy tone, clear the gland and biliary duct of the excretory accumulation, and all minor symptoms will, I am confident, disappear and leave our patient in the enjoyment of comfortable health."

"Do you really think so, doctor? You inspire me with hope."

Here Bridget's red face appeared at the door. "It's the pain-killer stuff I'm wantin', Mis' Barry, to stop that by's howlin'; an' it's little gravy ye'll be gittin' wid yer dinner, and ivry drop on me clane flure, an' the rist on Master Sam's ligs, bud luck to him!"

"Lizzie, do go and see what the matter is," said Mrs. Barry; "that boy is always in mischief. You will find the pain-killer on the second shelf in the medicine closet."

When I reached the scene of the disaster, I found a small lake of gravy on the floor, the sauce-pan upside down in the middle, and Sam dancing round it, "howlin'" as Bridget expressed it, with the pain.

"Will ye kape out o' me way thin nixt time?" said the indignant damsel; "ye got ye're desarts for rinnin' full tilt agin' a body wid a bilin' sass-pan, an' the praties a bilin' to rags, and the turkey ather a bustin', and all this grase to be claned up, and the table to be sot for dinner, and that Katie wid a filin on her finger, an' niver a sowl to take a stip but me-self."

"Keep out of the way!" roared the injured innocent, still continuing his evolutions, "Just hear that—will you? How's a fellow to keep out of her way, when she runs down on him like a man-o'-war under full sail, and empties a quart of sizzling hot gravy all over his shins? Ough! Ough!"

I bound up the scalded limbs, helped restore order and cleanliness to Bridget's domain, and promising to set the table for her by and by, ran back to my mistress.

I found Dr. Sharpe seated at the table with some square bits of paper before him, upon which he carefully distributed little powders from two little bottles at his side. He was talking busily. "Let us suppose that we have reached the seat of the disease, and by active

remedies have removed the primary cause, and corrected the morbid condition of the glands and tissues. Is this all? By no means. We find, especially in the exquisitely sensitive organization of delicate females, that after long illness there is a want of elasticity, an inertia, a lack of healthy action, which, if long remaining, induces a tendency to succumb again to disease. Now, it stands to reason that the thing to be done is to rouse the dormant sensibility to excitement and full enjoyment, and thus help on the machinery of the body. This we do by the judicious introduction of a gentle stimulant, which shall be carried with the circulation into every nook and corner of the body, that thus a vivifying modification may be kept up; for loss of substance we shall obtain a change of substance. We shall stimulate the whole nervous system; we shall give Nature time to rally her forces, and—

"Cure her up," suggested Sam, who followed me to his mother's room for sympathy.

"Exactly, my son—'a consummation most devoutly to be wished.' What is medicine?" said Dr. Sharpe, transfixing Mrs. Barry's youngest with his eye.

"Castor oil and rhubarb," said Sam, promptly.

"Medicine," said Dr. Sharpe, looking severely at the boy, "is derived from the Latin word *medicina*, from *medior*, to cure; remember that, my little man. You will do well, Mrs. Barry," he continued, rising and drawing on his gloves, "to take either before or after meals,—which by the way, should consist of food containing the greatest amount of nourishment,—something of the description I have mentioned; a little old Bourbon whiskey I would recommend; and allow me to suggest that Mr. Barry will find a very superior article, the identical 'Jaco,' as pure as the dew-drop, at Chadwick's. He may say Dr. Sharpe sent him. In a somewhat extensive practice," said the little doctor, straightening himself and giving his head an awful rub, "I have found this, as a pharmaceutical preparation, a nutritious and wholesome stimulant. I have prescribed it in a multitude of cases, and with the most gratifying results. It is soothing and stimulating, reviving and restorative."

"And not bad to take," said Sam, pertly.

"In short," said Dr. Sharpe, "I think it will meet your case exactly. I have the honor to wish you good morning;" and he was bowing himself out when Mr. Barry entered the room.

"Ah, doctor, well met," he said. "Come take off your coat, and let Pat put up your horse till after dinner. I have brought our new minister home with me, and we shall be glad of your company. Lay aside professional cares and join us."

The doctor said he would be most happy, if Mr. Barry would allow him to step round with Pat to the stable, and give a few directions about his horse.

"O, Philip, how could you ask company to

dinner!" said Mrs. Barry, as soon as the doctor was out of hearing. "I am sure there is nothing in the house fit to eat, and Katie has a felon on her hand, and cannot wait on table. What shall we do?"

"I can wait on table, Mrs. Barry," I said, "if you will trust me." I had been long enough with her to learn the ways of the house.

"Of course she can," said Mr. Barry. "Now, Clara, don't fret. Your dinner is good enough. I met Mr. Elliott on his way from the depot, and, in decency, I could not let him go to the hotel to dine. Well, how do you like the doctor?"

"Very much," said Mrs. Barry, with more animation than she usually displayed. "He is a perfect gentleman; likes to hear himself talk; perhaps you will think him a little boastful, but that is quite to be expected in one of his ability and experience. But he is wide awake, so different from sleepy Dr. Burton, and he took hold of my case with great interest."

"What did he say?"

"O, he talked about the nervous system, and the waste of tissue, and the laws of expenditure and supply. I am sure he told me more about my liver, and the chambers of my heart, than I ever knew in my life before."

"Yes, but did he appear to understand your case? I think Dr. Burton did not know what ailed you."

"O, yes; he says I have a weakness, and a lack of vital power, and a torpid condition of the liver, and a slight sympathetic affection of the heart, and something the matter, I don't remember what, with my great nervous centres. Wasn't that all, Lizzie?"

"I should call it enough," said her husband.

"O, but he's certain to cure me. He has left some demercuri powders, I think he called them, to be taken every night, and a draught in the morning, and orders Bourbon whiskey as a tonic, and says you are to get it at Chadwick's; and really I feel better already. Lizzie, you may braid my hair, and get my brown silk dress. I think I feel well enough to go down to dinner."

"So much," said Mr. Barry, "for the moral effect of a doctor."

CHAPTER IV.

DINNER-TABLE TALK.

"If all the world
Should in a fit of temperance feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but
frieze,
Th' All Giver would be unthanked, would be un-
praised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
And a penurious niggard of his wealth."

Shakespeare.

An hour later a pleasant company gathered round Mr. Barry's hospitable table. The host was in his element, and proud of his elegant surroundings, and pleased with the opportunity for display, he was in high good humor. He glanced at the well-furnished table, over which his wife so gracefully presided, with a well-satisfied smile.

Philip Barry was dressed in the latest style, and bejewelled and perfumed; but, with his mother's regularity of feature, there was an expression so heavy and sensual upon his handsome face, that it was less attractive to me than Sam's freckled visage, scratched and marred as it was from the effect of some late accident or encounter.

The minister was a young man, with a pleasant boyish face; and Dr. Sharpe came from the dressing-room with his hair brushed so close to his head that his appearance was most astonishingly changed.

"You will taste my wine, gentlemen," Mr. Barry said, when the dessert was placed on the table. "Native wine, doctor, and a prime article. Allow me, Mr. Elliott. Perfectly harmless, my dear sir, I assure you. Nothing but the pure juice of the grape."

"Ah!" said Dr. Sharpe; "native wine did you say?"

"Yes, sir, the Catawba wine, first brand, and called a superior article; a wine that is getting a reputation through the country for its fruitiness, flavor, and generous qualities; the pure juice, sir; not a particle of alcohol about it. I get it direct from the manufacturers, and I know it to be the genuine article, the real 'Simon Pure.' Try it, doctor, try it."

The doctor tried it with a relish.

"The grape-growing business is getting to be one of marked importance at the West," he said.

"Yes, and a very profitable business it is. I visited, last September, one of the largest vineyards in the neighborhood of Cincinnati—Schantz & Brother: you may have heard of it. It was worth seeing, I assure you. They showed me thirty acres of fat land, sloping to the south-east, and well covered with vines. It was a very pretty sight. In a good season they tell me they make eight hundred gallons of wine to an acre, and sell it at from ten to twelve dollars per dozen. Not a bad profit that. And these young men came to Cincinnati, ten years ago, with just two hundred dollars in their pockets between them. I suppose there are not many richer men in the city to-day. I should like to see this whole Connecticut valley one vast vineyard. Your glass, doctor. Mr. Elliott, you do not drink, sir."

The young minister raised the glass to his lips, but I noticed that he barely tasted its contents. He was silent and ill at ease.

"One of the good gifts of God," said Dr. Sharpe, holding his glass to the light, and subjecting it to the ocular test forbidden by

Scripture, "among the first of the blessings bestowed upon our race; for what says the patriarch? 'God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.' One of the good gifts of God." Eh, Mr. Elliott?"

"A good gift that is greatly abused, I fear, in our day," said the young man.

"And will you tell me, sir," said Dr. Sharpe, "what good gift of God has not been abused? and shall we reject what is in itself good, because there are fools who pervert it to evil? Why, sir, with the wholesome nutritious food that supports your natural life, you may so overload the stomach as to produce disease. Because Lucullus and his guests made gluttons of themselves, shall I exclude all luxuries from my table? Because a man over here killed himself eating green corn the other day, shall I swear never to taste corn again? I tell you, sir, 'all creatures of God are good;' and as I read my Bible, they are all given to us to enjoy in moderation. 'All things are yours,' says the apostle; and I rejoice to believe that this life-giving, life-saving fluid is one of the good things created, and which God has commanded us to receive with thanksgiving and partake with moderation."

He rubbed his head so many times during this speech, that when he had finished it looked like a hay-stack, and he glared quite savagely through his spectacles at poor Mr. Elliott.

"Give me your hand, doctor," said Mr. Barry, reaching his own across the table. "You speak my mind exactly; and it is quite refreshing, in these days of fanatical teetotalism, to have a sensible Bible view of the subject. I rejoice, sir, that a man of your enlightened views has come among us."

The doctor glowed with satisfaction.

"But, doctor," said Mr. Elliott, "where you are strong, your neighbor may be weak. To my mind there is no stronger argument used by the teetotaler"—he hesitated a little as he spoke the word—"than this: 'I will drink nothing intoxicating lest I encourage drunkenness, the great and crying sin of the age. 'If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth.'"

"Twaddle," said Dr. Sharpe. "Poor, weak, sentimental nonsense! I must do what I know to be right, and if others pervert my example, that is their lookout. Paul was putting an extreme case. It's plain enough to see that. Didn't he eat meat all his life, and command his followers to go to the shamblers and buy without asking whether it had been offered to idols or not? Did he bind them to any total abstinence pledge? Didn't he tell them they were called to the liberty, the glorious liberty of the Gospel?"

'He is a freeman whom the *Truth* makes free, All else are slaves'—

and so, sir, I consider it a duty I owe to my

fellow-men to partake moderately of wine and spirits, in company, that I may give my protest against drunkenness on the one hand and fanatical teetotalism on the other."

It was a duty Dr. Sharpe performed with cheerful alacrity on the present occasion, Philip Barry looking on with all the approbation his heavy face was capable of expressing, while his young brother applauded softly with knife and fork on the table.

"Physicians are using the article very extensively in their practice at the present day," said Mr. Barry.

"And with great success, sir," returned the doctor. "Our most eminent practitioners are giving it their unanimous and unqualified approval. Take a case of fever, for instance, urgent, but under the influence of stimulant doing well—the ship in a terrible sea, but minding the helm, and steering steadily; at such a time I have longed to have a radical total abstinence man at my side, that I might say to him, pointing to my patient, 'There, sir, is a glorious example of the use of that good gift of God you, in your stupidity and folly, would cast away.' The man is taking, we will say, a tablespoonful of sherry every hour, or a larger allowance of claret, or a smaller proportion of brandy, as the case may require, the dose varying to meet the different phases of the disease; and at every dose you can almost see health returning, the cheek less flushed, the skin cooler, the eye clearer, the pulse less frequent; in fact, all unfavorable symptoms giving way before its life-giving power. Sir, it is wonderful."

"Well, what's the philosophy of it, doctor? Does alcohol feed the man?"

"Not at all. It stimulates the nervous system. It spurs the nerves and nervous centres, and keeps them awake, when otherwise they would go to sleep and leave the vital functions to fail, to flag; in fact, to go to sleep too. The nervous power is kept active, and this excites the vital force."

"But, doctor," said Mr. Elliott, "you are putting the man's vital strength to a terrible strain. To go a little further with your own illustration: Suppose your steamship has a limited supply of coal and water. You are using it up at a tremendous rate. What if it gives out?"

"Well, we must run the risk of that," said Dr. Sharpe. "We cannot afford to let our fire get low. Our best chance is in 'cracking on,' as they say, in the hope that the good ship may reach some friendly shelter, where she can coal and water for the rest of the way."

Here Sam, who had lately been engaged in building miniature ships, and, consequently, was deeply interested in nautical affairs, broke in:—

"And what if she don't?" said, the boy eagerly.

"Then she goes under, my son; or, in other words, the patient dies. But even in that

case, the narcotic influence of the alcohol deadens and quiets the nervous centres and the brain, and he drops quietly away."

"I should hate to die drunk," said Sam.

"Among all your remedies," said Mr. Elliott, "is there nothing that can be substituted for alcohol—quinine, columbo, cascarrilla, ammonia?"

"Sir," said Dr. Sharpe, "alcohol is the menstruum for more than one hundred and fifty preparations of the pharmacopœia." He fired this off as if he had been shot. "Do without alcohol? As well make bread without flour as prepare those remedies without their basis. Alcohol imparts a power of resistance to the enervating influence of a hot climate. It is an antidote to poisonous malaria; it is an antidote to impure water. Sir, it is a well-established fact in medical science, that cold water, taken in excess, increases the interstitial metamorphosis of tissue. Our seamen must have their dram; our soldiers would be cowards without it."

"Father," said Sam, "in the book you gave me Christmas, it says, 'Havelock's soldiers never were drunk and never afraid.'"

The doctor took out his watch. "I must really tear myself away," he said; and, with his hair in a dreadful state of disorder, he bowed himself out. It was the signal for the breaking up of the party. Mr. Barry and the minister walked down street together, and Mrs. Barry went to her room for her afternoon nap. Philip, his face flushed, and his gait a little unsteady, sauntered out to the stables, and Sam and I were left in the dining-room. While I gathered up the silver, he lingered about the table, boy-like, picking nuts and raisins from the plates. He stopped at Dr. Sharpe's seat, and filled the empty glass.

"One of the good gifts of God," he said, running his fingers through his hair, and imitating the doctor's pompous manner to the life, "which I consider it my duty to enjoy on all occasions."

"Put it down, Sam," I said. "O, don't drink it."

"Why not? Father don't care. There's hundreds of bottles down cellar. He's bricked up a place on purpose for them."

"But it will hurt you," I said. "Please don't drink it."

Sam looked at me in astonishment.

"Well, if that isn't a good one!" he said, at length; "after you've heard the learned doctor lecture for half an hour on the virtues of the life-giving fluid; pitching into the teetotalers, and giving them fits generally; and proving it all out of the Bible, too! Why, Lizzie, what's come over you?"

"I can't help it Sam. I know he is learned and scientific, and all that, and I cannot answer his arguments; but I know that he is wrong. It made my heart ache to hear him talk so—a gray-headed man, who has been about the world so much, and must know the

cruel things drink is doing. And, worse than all the rest, he tried to prove it from the Bible, and talked about 'the glorious liberty of the Gospel,' as if that holy book, anywhere, gives people liberty to make beasts of themselves, or to tempt others to the dreadful habit. This is what it says: 'Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.' I thought of that text while he was talking, for it was one of my references last Sabbath. And in another place it says, 'Woe to him that giveth his neighbor drink.' O, how can a Christian man talk like that?"

"I wonder why the minister kept so still," said Sam. "He hardly said a word; and did you mind how uneasy he looked, and hardly tasted his wine? But, O Lizzie, what a funny little man the new doctor is! He rubs his head so much that the bare spot on top shines like a looking-glass. Why don't you laugh? I declare you look really cross, and your face is as red as a blaze. Lizzie, keep cool."

"How can I?" I said. "I felt vexed and sorry to hear Dr Sharpe talk so, and Philip and you sitting by. And, Sam, it makes me shudder now to see that glass of wine in your hand."

"Pooh!" said Sam, coloring, and setting down the wine. I don't care for the stuff. I should be ashamed to swill it down as Phil does. What with his cigars, and his lager beer, and fast horses, he's getting to be a regular loafer. Well I'm off; but, Lizzie,"—coming back, and putting his head in at the door,—“what's a fellow going to do? He don't want his *tissues metamorphosized* drinking cold water—does he?"

I was still busy in the dining-room, washing Katy's silver, when Philip Barry came in. I had seldom spoken with this young man. With his brother, who was in all parts of the house a dozen times a day, and in his mother's room, where my duties chiefly lay, most of all, I was on familiar terms of acquaintance; and with all the boy's love of fun and mischief, and a certain pertness that made him disagreeable at times, there was a frank openheartedness and generosity of disposition that I liked exceedingly; and we were good friends. His brother I seldom saw, and, to tell the truth, was glad to keep out of his way.

He came in to-day for another glass of wine I suppose, for he looked disappointed when he found the table cleared, and the wine locked up in the old-fashioned sideboard in the corner of the dining-room. He stood a moment in the doorway, his jaunty cap on one side, a cigar in his mouth, and his hands in his pockets. Then, coming close to me, and putting his hand familiarly on my shoulder, he asked me to run to Katy for the key of the sideboard. I did his bidding, and on my return found him standing before the mirror admiring himself.

"I say, Lizzie," he called out, "what do

you think of this new suit of mine About the thing—isn't it?"

I said it was very handsome.

"Yes, they do things up about right at Snipper's. Fashionable tailors, but very dear; but the governor's got the tin, you know. Ha, ha!" He took the key from my hand, and opening the sideboard, helped himself to I know not how many glasses of wine; then coming close to me again, "I say, Lizzie," he said, "a blue ribbon wouldn't look bad in that brown hair of yours; and you'd call it cheap for a kiss now—wouldn't you?"

I left my silver unfinished, and ran up-stairs to my mistress.

CHAPTER V.

THE OLD HERB WOMAN.

"She, roaming, with her pack, the country side,
From house to house on trade and gossip bent,
And kind and fearless in her honest pride,
Is with her wandering life full well content."

I was in the kitchen one morning, doing some fine starching for Mrs. Barry, when the outer door was thrown open, and a tall woman entered the room. Her clothes were travel-stained and old. She wore heavy shoes upon her feet, and a cap with a broad ruffle, and a monstrous black bonnet upon her head. She stalked across the room with rather an unsteady gait, speaking to no one until she was comfortably seated by the fire. Then she set down the basket she carried, carefully folded back her dress, and extended a pair of monstrous feet upon the hearth. Her face was red, her features large, but not uncomely, and there was a good-humored twinkle in her black eye.

"You don't want no elder buds, nor alder buds, nor gilead buds, nor white pine bark, nor sassafras, nor life-o'-man, nor garden parsley roots—do ye?" she said in a voice pitched on a high treble.

"Hallo, Huld! is that you?" said Sam, coming in at that moment; "I want some sassafras bark."

"Ax yer ma for a sixpence," she rejoined, withdrawing her basket from his meddlesome fingers.

Away went Sam.

"Who is she?" I inquired, following Bridget to the pantry.

"Who is she? Sure it's meself don't know, nor nobody else. It's a poor, wanderin' body that niver had a home. The mistress has a tinder heart, God bless her! It isn't the likes of her shuts their doors to them that's in trouble. So she lits her come and go as she plaises, and we gives her odd jobs to do, jist to kape her aisy like. It's a strong arm she has

whin she's the will to lift it; more shame to her that she can't let the craythur alone."

"Here's your sixpence, Huld, to fill up the black bottle," said Sam, returning; "and mother says you are to stay, and sweep the attic, and clean the wood-shed chamber, and scour the pantry, and scrub the kitchen, and bring up in the cellar, and we'll have a ginral cleaning."

"Will yez be quiet, Sam Barry?" said Bridget; "or I'll tell the mistress how yer tongue runs away wid ye."

"Will yez be quiet, bridget Flannagan? or I'll tell Pat Maloney who you talked with at the back gate Sunday night," retorted Sam.

"The by has eyes in the back of his head and wakes all the time he's slapin'," said the discomfited Bridget.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Sam; "I've got you there, Biddy. O, be aisy—can't ye?"

"Thin will yez let her alone? Shure I can't kape a quiet tongue in me head and hear a puir body run on the like o' that."

The "puir body" looked well able, with her good right arm, to fight her own battles; but she was taking it very quietly, apparently equally indifferent to the attacks of her enemy and the defence of her friend. She deliberately laid aside her bonnet, and lighted her pipe, and sat puffing away, with half-closed eyes in perfect content.

"Isn't she jolly?" said Sam, aside, to me. "O, but she makes the feathers fly sometimes. This morning she's got just enough aboard to feel good-natured. I wish you could hear her talk. I mean to try to stir her up." He sat down to chew his sassafra.

"The folks are all a-dyin' out to Varnon," said Huldah, taking her pipe from her mouth.

"Dew tell!" said Sam.

She looked at him a little doubtfully; but Sam was as grave as a judge.

"Square Demin's young uns are all down with the measles, wust kind, too. Ike Wilson, he got bit by a rattlesnake, a week ago Friday, when he was cuttin' timber on Bolton Mountain; leg swelled up as big as a barrel. Then one o' them Purnoy gals pizened herself with ratsbane, and old Miss Bascom swallowed a fish-bone, and choked till her face was as black as the chimbley."

"How you talk!" said Sam.

"And Zeke Terry—every knows Zeke—used to team it between Harford and Varnon; lives on the middle road, jest afore yer come to the big hill. He married one o' them Skinner gals, the long-favored, humbly one, you know. Well, they found him last Sunday morning, hangin' on an apple-tree, back side o' the barn, stunn dead. You see," said Huldah, warming with her subject, "he tuk the clothes line, and doubled it a sight o' times to make it stout enough, and then he clim' up and tied it onto him. He was a short, pussy little feller; but the limb was so nigh the ground he had to double his legs, or they'd teched.

The wimmin folks, they found him. Mis' Terry, she see him first, and they say she hollered so loud they heerd her clear over to Square Adams's. He was the blackest copse I ever see in my life."

She told the story with evident delight, lingering upon each horrid detail.

"What made him do it?" said Sam, a little sobered.

"Whiskey," said Huldah; "he drincked up all the old man's money, and the farm was mortgaged,—the puttiest piece o' medder land in Harford County,—and he got kinder desprit, and didn't know where to turn. If he'd kep stiddy he'd done well enough, for he was allers right smart for bizness; but he got to drinkin' and carryin' on down to the tavern every night. Sam Barry," said Huldah, with great solemnity, "don't yer drink a drop o' whiskey as long as yer live."

"What shall I drink?" said Sam—"gin?"

"Cold water," said Huldah, shaking her head with tipsy gravity.

"Cold water will metamorphosize my tissues." Dr. Sharpe said so—didn't he, Lizzie?"

"Yer see, boy," said Huldah, "if yer git a hankerin' arter it when yer young, yer can't never stop."

"Did you git a hankerin' arter it when you was young, Huld?"

"Well I did, child; it was, 'Huld, run and draw a pitcher o' cider;' and, 'Huld, fetch the toddy-stick;' and, 'Huld, taste o' this ere flip, and see if it's sweet enough.' When I was a gal everybody drincked. It was bitters in the mornin', and a dram at noon, and a mug o' smokin' hot flip at night; and I used to fetch an' carry. I kep house for father, yer see; mother died when I was goin' on fourteen. We owned a good farm out in York State, and in hayin' and harvestin' time there was plenty o' liquor round. Father wasn't no hand to stint folks, an' he could carry more inside than any man I ever see. Good land! he didn't make no more o' drinkin' a pint o' raw sperit afore breakfast than you would so much water; but he was a gitting along in years, and arter a spell it began to tell on him. He was pious, father was. He used to ax a blessin' afore every meal, and pray us all to sleep at bedtime. One hot day, in hayin' time, we all got sot round the dinner-table, an' father he put his two hands together to ax the blessin'; but there didn't no blessin' come. He jest stammered a bit, and down went his head on the table. Sez Mose Allen, sez he,—that's our hired man,—'God Almighty cuss the rum;' and that's all the blessin' we had that day."

"Well," said Sam, for she stopped to draw a long sigh from her great hollow chest.

"Well, the old man run down purty fast arter that, and went off at last in a fit o' the 'horrors.' The last words he said was, 'For the Lord's sake gin me some rum.' Then the farm had to be sold to pay off his debts."

"And where did you go?" said Sam, for she took up her pipe, as if her story was ended.

"Who, I? O, I went down to Utiky, and hired out to a rich old widdier woman. She dranked, too."

"Gracious!" said Sam; "and did you keep on tastin' there?"

Huldah drew another long breath from her capacious bosom.

"Well," she said at last, "she was a clever old body, and she done well by me too. She was all swelled up with the dropsy, and couldn't git round much, and she needed a sight o' waitin' an' tendin'. Law, I never shall forgit, to my dyin' day, how every Friday afternoon—them's the days the minister used to come and see her,—she sot great store by his visits—she'd say to me, sez she, 'Huldy,' sez she, 'put on my Sunday go-to-meetin' cap, an' my best linen cambric hankercher, an' git my gold-rim spectacles,' sez she, 'an' wheel out the little round table, an' open the big Bible, an' draw up my arm-cheer,' sez she, 'an' then you go an' see if Dr. Nichols is a comin'."

"So I'd git her nicely fixed, an' she'd turn over the leaves till she'd find the place,—she was mighty fond o' readin' out loud,—'And the Lord spake unto Moses sayin'—'Huldy, Huldy, is Dr. Nichols comin', Huldy?' 'No, marm,' sez I. 'Well, Huldy,' sez she, 'go to the corner cupboard, the keepin'-room,' sez she, 'an' git me one spunful out o' the dimijohn; only *one spunful*, Huldy.' 'Yes marm,' sez I; 'an', Huldy,' sez she, 'don't forgit the nutmeg, nor the sugar,' sez she. 'No, marm,' sez I. So I fixes it all nice, an' it cherks her up wonderful. Then she starts off agin: 'And the Lord spake unto Moses—'Huldy, Huldy, is Dr. Nichols a-comin', Huldy?' 'Yes, marm,' sez I; he's jest round the corner.' 'Well, run quick Huldy,' sez she, 'an' git me one spunful out o' the demijohn, an' never mind the nutmeg an' the sugar this time.' Well, she wouldn't more'n git that down, an' the glass chucked away, 'fore in comes the minister. She's well primed by that time. Land o' liberty! how she would quote scriptur! 'Your missus ain't long for this world,' sez the minister, sez he, when I was a-waitin' on him out."

"Well she got worse by an' by. There came a powerful big swellin' on her shoulder, an' she had sich a gnawin' an' a burnin' inside on her, it seemed as her in'ards was all afire. Well, two or three doctors come to look at her, and sez she to the head one, 'What do you think of me, doctor?' sez she. 'It's my duty to tell you, m-r-m, to prepare for the wust,' sez he. 'You don't mean to say I'm-a-going' to die?' sez my missus, a-flamin' up. 'You may drop off any time,' sez he. 'You lie!' sez she; 'yer a good-for-nothin' old quack! I won't die! I tell yer I won't die!' an' she up with a big junk bottle o' medicine, an' flung it straight at his head."

"Well she tuk on dretful for awhile, and then, sez she, kinder low an' faint like:

'Huldy,' sez she, 'git me one spunful out o' the dimijohn; jest *one spunful*.' She could swaller, an' that was all. I see she was a sink-in' fast, an' I couldn't help feelin' bad, for she'd been a good missus. 'What are yer cryin' for?' sez she, kinder snappish. 'Cause yera-dyin', sez I. 'I ain't, nuther,' sez she; 'an' them's the last words she spoke."

"Well," said Huldah, wiping her eyes, "they gin me the dimijohn, and all t'was in it; but there warn't more'n a pint on't left."

"O, tell us some more, Huldy," said Sam; "where did you go then?"

But she was not to be coaxed. "I'll git on my every-day gownd," she said, "and go to work."

I wondered where the "every-day gownd" was coming from, for, save her basket of herbs, she came empty-handed. But I was soon enlightened. In less time than it takes me to write it, she threw off the old brown delaine dress she wore, displaying underneath a gorgeous striped calico. This, too, was thrown aside, and she stood before us arrayed in a faded gingham. Last of all, she appeared in a scant blue cotton homespun, barely reaching to her ankles. If I thought her tall before, what was she now, drawn to her full height, her bare brawny arms a-kimbo! The pile of cast-off clothes at her side was a sight to behold; and I watched the process of disrobing with the interest one might feel in seeing a mummy unrolled, wondering what we should come to at last. I even looked suspiciously at the "every-day gownd," wondering what further stock in the dry goods line might be hidden beneath its scanty folds. Some of these garments were tied by the sleeves to her waist; others hung by a single button, and all were arranged so as not to impede locomotion.

"Now I call that the way to travel," said Sam, admiringly; "no great trunks to break porters' backs; no 'big box, little box, band-box, and bundle.' 'Women allowed to take what baggage they can carry on their backs.' That's going to be the rule aboard my train of cars. O Huldy, you are the girl for me."

She surveyed him with a look of lofty patronage. "I'll go up chamber," said she, "and see what Mis' Barry wants I should take hold on fust."

"I should think you would vex her sometimes, Sam," I said, when she was out of hearing. "She is sharp enough to know when you make sport of her."

"'Deed she is," said Bridget; "and it's meself is glad to see him kitch it times. She kin whip a grown man aisy, lit alone a spalpeen like him. I was wake wid laffin', one day, after he'd grased her mop an' tracked her clane floor, an' bothered around till the blissed St. Francis wud a lost patience, to see her kitch him up squirmen', and lay him over her knees like a babby, niver mindin' his kickin' an' screamin' no more'n you'd mind a skeety."

"That was fun," said Sam.
 "An' was it fun when she ducked the head of yez in the darty wather, after ye'd dropped a live straddle-bug in her wash-tub?" said Bridget.

"O, honey, be aisy," said Sam; "Lizzie, I never made her mad but once, real tearing mad, you know; and that was when I called her a fool. Mother said I must tell her I was sorry for that."

"And did you?"

"Of course I did. I got down on my knees, and says I, 'Huldy, I am *real sorry you are a fool.*'"

CHAPTER VI.

PLEASANT MEMORIES.

"It haunts me still, though many a year has fled,
 Like some wild melody."

Rogers.

Under Dr. Sharpe's treatment, Mrs. Barry's health rapidly improved, and in a few weeks her friends were gratified to find her gaining flesh and color. "I believe it is the Bourbon," she laughingly said to the doctor, when he complimented her on her improved appearance. "It acts like a charm. My husband says I grow young every day."

The doctor was delighted. "The very result I anticipated, my dear madam," he said. "It is among the happy effects of this remedy that it rejuvenates the blood, filling out the glands and tissues, at the same time it keeps up a vivifying modification in the capillaries of the mucous membrane of the stomach."

"It was really disagreeable at first, doctor. I used to think I could not take spirits of any kind, my stomach is so weak; but after a few doses, I was able to bear the Bourbon very well, and now I quite like the taste of it."

"The gastric fluids prevent any acetous fermentation to which alcohol is subject, Mrs. Barry. We often use it as a stomach restorative. You find it not only a stimulant but a sedative, most soothing and quieting in its influence upon the whole system."

"Doctor, I find it everything; a kind of sovereign remedy for 'all the ills that flesh is heir to.' I come in exhausted, after my ride, and it rests and strengthens me for all day. If anything goes wrong about the house—and you know all housekeepers have their troubles,—and I find myself growing nervous and excited, I resort to my Bourbon, and feel calm directly. I know it gives me strength for extra duties. It increases my appetite, and, when I take it before retiring, I sleep like an infant."

"Very good," said the doctor. "I think we are on the right track, Mrs. Barry."

"I shall feel grateful to Dr. Sharpe as long as I live," I heard Mrs. Barry say to her hus-

band one day. "I feel like a new creature since he took hold of my case. What a blessing it is to have a good doctor!"

Those were quiet, happy days in my new home. I love to remember them. I linger over them. I cannot bear to leave them behind; for though even then, the shadow of a great sorrow was darkening under the roof, we knew it not. And in the foreground of every picture my memory paints, I see one graceful, womanly form; one sweet face, the angel of the house, the centre of all those home joys, the happy wife, the dear mother, the kind mistress and friend.

Let me recall some of those pictures. It is a cool evening in October. The parlors are not warmed, but in "mother's room," from the open fireplace, a bright fire blazes. It penetrates to all parts of the room. The crimson curtains glow with it. It flashes over the mirror and dressing-table, revealing all the elegant trifles of a lady's toilet. It lights up every flower in the pattern of the soft carpet scarcely less beautiful in their form and coloring than the real flowers that fill the room with their perfume. And in its glow, the warm light shining full upon her face, I see her sitting—my dear mistress. I think as I gaze, that, with that exquisite complexion, those deep, loving, mother's eyes, and that quiet smile, she must be lovelier in the maturity of her forty years than in the full flush of her girlish beauty. I think of this, sitting in my quiet corner, and fancy that Sam, lying on the carpet at her feet, thinks so too. Certainly, as he raises his eyes now and then to her face, her white hand all the while caressing his rough hair, the firelight flashes into them, and I see a look of admiration and homage such as a lover might give to his mistress, but which Sam, perhaps, would consider it beneath his boyish dignity to express in words for his mother. Meanwhile, the husband and father in his luxurious arm-chair, stretches his slippered feet to the fire, and glances over his paper now and then at the group, the word *mine* written in his proud eye and complacent smile.

O, cruel destroyer, to violate such a sanctuary! O, ruthless enemy, to break in upon such love!

Another picture. It is a rainy day in summer. Outside, the ceaseless patter, the soft music on the roof, and the stirring of the green leaves as the cool drops kiss their faces. Within we are very quiet. I have been reading aloud, something about the death of a little child. It stirs old memories in the mother's heart, and, for the first time, she speaks to me of the baby girl she lost years ago. I am sent to a vacant chamber to bring a little trunk. It is not heavy; but I feel, as I carry it through the long hall, as if I was bearing a child's coffin. I set it down reverently at her feet. Slowly, one by one, from their wrappings between lavender leaves, she takes the

clothes her dead baby wore, touching them very softly, and laying them on her knees. She kisses the dainty lace caps, the bright corals that rested on the dimpled shoulders, and presses the little worn shoes to her heart. She does not cry much; but all the mother is in her eyes, and by and by, holding in her hand a rubber ring, all dented with the print of little teeth, she talks to me about her lost darling; telling me how, if she had lived, she would be almost a woman grown, but hopes she shall find her a baby in heaven. Then Sam, coming in, rude and boisterous, from the outer world, is hushed and sobered in a moment, and tries to slink away; but his mother calls him back to say a few earnest words about his sister in heaven. And the boy forgets to be meddlesome, and looks, but never touches, and, softened and subdued, but ashamed to show it, rubs his nose with his dirty knuckles, and winks hard to keep back the tears.

O, cruel foe! O, enemy worse than death! to raise a barrier between that mother and her angel child!

Once more. I am sad and burdened. I am worrying about mother. The ease and happiness of my own life bring hers in sad contrast. I think of her, plying her needle so closely, rising early and sitting up late, and still, with all the help I can give her, barely earning bread for herself and her children. I try to keep back the tears, but they drop upon my work. Presently a soft hand touches my shoulder. "What is it, Lizzie?" my mistress says, and never leaves me till she gets to the very bottom of my heart. And then, comforting me with a few words of sympathy, she sits down to think, and to such good purpose that when her husband comes home in the evening she has a plan all arranged. Mrs. Barry's plans are generally carried out, for Mr. Barry is very proud of his handsome wife, and her wish is his law. When I go to my little room at night she follows me, and, sitting on the bed by my side, she tells, with loving enthusiasm, how it is all settled—that mother is to give up the old house, which is tumbling to pieces over her head, move down to the village, and keep a factory boarding-house. Mr. Barry will take the house, and advance the money she needs to furnish a better, and pay the first quarter's rent. She tells me this with sparkling eyes, and puts her fingers lightly on my lips when I try to speak my thanks. And it is all accomplished so quietly that in a week my dear mother is settled in her new home, busy, but not over worked, and greatly benefited by the change. Dear, generous, noble-hearted woman! I never saw her angry in those days but once, and then it was with her youngest boy, her "baby," as she still loved to call him.

He ran in one day in great excitement and high glee.

"O mother, such fun with Huldah! She's as

drunk as she can be. She's been hollering and screeching all the way from 'The Corners,' and we boys chased her, and pelted her with mud. Mother, you don't know how she swore at us, and every time she tried to catch us she fell in the gutter."

His mother rose to her feet, her eyes flashing, and a scarlet spot on each cheek.

"Did you pelt that poor creature with mud?" she said.

"All the other boys did," whimpered Sam.

"You cruel, mean, wicked boy! I am ashamed to call you son. Where is the poor woman?"

"She tumbled down on the kitchen doorstep," said Sam, looking greatly crestfallen.

A moment after, Mrs. Barry was bending over the bloated, disfigured object, with scarce a trace of womanhood about her, lying upon the threshold. She was covered with dirt and blood, for she struck her head in falling, and the wound bled freely. With her own hand Mrs. Barry lifted the tangled gray hair from the dishonored head, tenderly wiping the blood away. "Poor creature!" was all she said; but there was a world of pity in her voice and in the touch of her hand. When a comfortable bed was provided, and Huldah was laid down, as senseless as a log, I saw Mrs. Barry steal softly in, to see that she was comfortably covered.

"She called me *mean*," said Sam to me, in great disgust. "Wicked and *mean*. It's bad enough to be wicked, but I believe I would rather be called wicked than mean."

"If you are one, you will be very apt to be the other," I said; "for the two go hand in hand."

"You know the difference," said the boy. "It's wicked to steal and to swear, or to break any of the commandments; and its mean—well, to pelt an old drunken woman with mud, I suppose."

"Then you don't call it mean to sneak into a man's room when he is asleep and steal his money, or to speak lightly of the God who made you? O Sam! all wicked actions are mean, and despicable, and unworthy. Be true and love God supremely, and you will never be called mean."

"Now, Lizzie, don't preach. I feel cross, and hateful, and bad enough, without being lectured. Do come and beat me as hard as ever you can. It will feel good."

I loved this boy. People called him "the black sheep of the family," because, unlike the rest, he was plain in personal appearance and rough in manner. But he had a noble heart, was frank, affectionate, and unselfish in disposition, and possessed a fund of drollery and good humor that made him a most agreeable companion. We were much together in his mother's room and about the house; and he often called upon me for assistance in his amusements out of doors. I think he liked me; and I earnestly desired to use the influence I

possessed over him for good, and to see his many endearing qualities of head and heart supplemented by higher Christian virtues. But I found it difficult to talk to Sam on the subject of religion. Let me approach the matter ever so delicately, he was sure to take the alarm, and either be suddenly called away, or, by some irresistibly comical remark, make me laugh, and so divert me from my purpose. If these methods failed, and I persisted in pursuing the unwelcome subject, he would listen a while and then say, with a terrific yawn, —

"There now, you have preached enough for this time. Lizzie, you and mother are first rate in your way; but you are dreadfully tiresome when you talk religion."

Up to this time, I remember but one opportunity he gave me to press the matter home to his heart. We were planting flower-seeds, one morning, in his mother's garden, when he suddenly put this question to me:—

"Lizzie, what is it to be a Christian?"

"It is to love the Lord Jesus Christ," said I, "with all your heart."

"Yes, I know that's what the Bible says; and that people who thin they are pious join the church, and take bread and wine communion-days, and go to church every Sunday and to prayer-meetings in the week time; but what I mean is, how do they *really live* any different from other people? You see, I was thinking about it in church the other Sunday, — I wish somebody would tell Mr. Elliott not to preach such long sermons, — and I counted up the church members who sit right around us, and tried to think what good their religion did them. There's Mr. Clair, with his head full of railroad stocks and bank dividends from Monday morning till Saturday night. What sort of a Christian do you call him? And Squire Rawson, all taken up with politics; and old Reed, who can't see anything but the 'almighty dollar;' and Deacon Gibbs, who gets mad and all but swears; and Jim Philips, who loves a good horse a sight better than he loves a prayer-meeting; and Mr. Brown, who owns stock in a company that runs trains on Sunday; and — well, I don't think of any other just now. But there's plenty more in our church; and a pretty example they set to the world!"

"One who sees so many faults in his neighbors ought to be about right himself," I said.

"At least, I don't make any professions," said the boy. "I would be ashamed to be a member of the church and live as those men do. I believe I stand just as good a chance of getting to heaven as any of them."

"Admitting for the sake of the argument, that all you say about these members of the church is true, Sam, do you think your chance of getting to heaven is any better because of

their inconsistencies? When you broke the regulations of the school the other day, and were sent up to the principal's room, do you think it would have helped your cause with Mr. Page to have told him that Tom Fisher communicated in study hours, and Bates played truant, and Forbes copied his example?"

"I'll bet it wouldn't," said Sam; "Mr. Page hates tell-tales."

"And when you come to stand before God's bar, 'to be judged for the deeds done here in the body,' do you think He will accept it as an excuse for your neglect of religion that Deacon Gibbs and Squire Rawson, and all the rest, were inconsistent Christians?"

"Of course not," said Sam. "What a question!"

"No. Well, then, I don't see what business it is of yours or mine whether they are good Christians or not. God will judge them, not you or I. And they are not our models. I don't find in my Bible that we are to follow in the steps of any man, but we are to be 'perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect.' O Sam, we have enough to do, you and I, and all of us, 'to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.' Our own sins are heavy enough to bear; for pity's sake, don't let us burden ourselves with the weight of other people's. I mean, by dwelling upon them and censuring them. In all gentleness and charity we ought to warn and counsel over all whom we have influence, who we know are doing wrong, remembering that only the grace of God in our hearts keeps us from committing the same transgressions. And Sam, — I can't help it if you do say I am lecturing you, — there will come a time when, if you have not found pardon and acceptance through the blood of your Saviour, the weight of your own sins will crush you to the earth and cover you with confusion and shame; for we must all die alone, meet God alone, and be judged alone. O Sam, how happy it would make your mother if you would become a Christian!"

He stood silently a moment, digging the toe of his boot deep in the sand; then he looked up, and shook his head.

"I can't," he said, sadly.

"Why not, Sam?"

"O, I don't know. Pray don't ask me any more questions." His seriousness was all gone in an instant. I am tired of talking about religion. Between you and mother, I think I get enough of it. Come, Lizzie, these seeds will not be in the ground before night, if you don't hurry."

I did not remind him that he commenced the conversation; but thinking it over afterwards I could not but hope the Spirit of God was striving in his heart.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LIGHT FROM A LITTLE GRAVE.

"Within the shrouded room below
 He lies a cold— And yet we know
 It is not Charley there!
 It is not Charley cold and white,
 It is the robe that in his flight
 He gently cast aside!
 Our darling hath not died!
 O rare still lips! O clouded eyes!
 O violet eyes grown dim!
 Ah well! this little lock of hair
 Is all of him!
 Is all of him that we can keep,
 For loving kisses, and the thought
 Of him and death may teach us more
 Than all our life hath taught!"

A few weeks after mother moved to her new home my little brother Johnny sickened and died. He was seized at first with a slight illness, scarcely noticed; then came the flush of fever, then alarming symptoms, misgivings, forebodings, and at last the sinking of heart, when hope gave way to the dreadful certainty that the child must die. But the young life was strong within. Nature rallied all her powers, fought every inch of ground with the cruel enemy, and the struggle was terrible.

It was over at last. "O, dear, O, dear! Ask God to take away the pain," was his oft-repeated cry through those days of anguish; and now our prayers were answered. He was quite free from suffering. The tired head rested on his mother's bosom, the laughing black eyes—father's eyes—looked lovingly in our faces. He was conscious and happy.

"There goes pussy," he said, with a smile, watching his four-footed playfellow as she ran across the floor. "Poor pussy, I never shall play with you any more. O, dear! I did want to grow up and be a man, and take care of mother; but I guess God wants me most. Baby Willie must hurry now,—mustn't he? Now, Lizzie, sing 'Die no more.'"

I sang his favorite hymn, my voice never once faltering. God gave me strength, I know. When I finished, he nodded his head approvingly, shaking back his hair in the old saucy way, and presently fell asleep. While we watched, expecting every breath to be his last, he suddenly started up, and cried out, in a quick, eager voice, "Mother! mother! there's a place for you there," and died.

Dear Johnny! such a guileless little lamb! The freshness and beauty of the early morning were his, but the dear Saviour loved him too well to let the hot, midday sun beat upon his head. Beautiful, bright flowers grew in his path—he never saw them wither and die! Eappy child! Yes, and happy mother! She closed his eyes, laid his head gently back on the pillow, and dropped upon her knees. I know that, in one earnest prayer of consecration, at the bedside of her dead boy, she gave her heart to Christ, making that place her own which the dying lips so joyfully proclaimed her Saviour had prepared for her. I

know this; for, though she never told me so in words, when she rose from her knees her face was radiant, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, was written on her brow. And when we laid him away in the bed which is so strange a one for infant sleepers, the same look was on her face. She sorrowed, but not as one without hope. Dear Johnny, thy work was done, and well done! Thank God for the light that shines upon us from little graves!

My mother's strength of character showed itself in her religion. Brave and self-reliant she always was, determined and undaunted in the face of great obstacles. Her love for her children was her meat and drink. "O, if I could die for him!" she said to me that last dreadful night of Johnny's sufferings; and I knew the wish came from her heart of hearts. That she had no controversy with God, but gave her idol back to Him with grief inexpressible, but without a murmur, was a sure proof to me that her heart was changed. If she was strong and brave before, how much more so was she now, with the inspiration of her new hope!

The evening of the funeral, as we all sat sadly together at home, the air suddenly grew dark, a clap of thunder shook the house, and big drops began to fall. My sister Annie ran from her place at the window, and, hiding her head in mother's lap, sobbed out, "O, mother, it rains on him!"

The thought of our timid, helpless baby, cherished and folded in our love, so close from every alarm, away from us, alone; the angry thunder, the howling wind, the gloomy cemetery, the lonely grave, the damp, heavy earth, the nailed coffin, the clinging death garments, the darkness, the horror, and the presence of that dread conqueror, the worm, all this struck a chill to my heart; but my mother answered cheerfully,—

"My darling, it will never rain on him again. The thunder will never frighten him, the tempest never beat on his head. Annie, your brother is in heaven."

Dear mother! What a happy change it was! The old bitterness of feeling that made her fight angrily, through all those years, with the adverse circumstances of her lot, often rejecting, in her pride, sympathy and aid from her more prosperous neighbors, passed away, and was succeeded by a cheerful, humble contentment in her own surroundings, and a large-hearted charity for others. What a joy of heart this change brought to me will be readily understood. For a long time I had been my mother's companion. We seemed to sustain this relationship to each other, rather than that of mother and child, for my brothers and sisters were mere infants; and during our days of poverty and trial, when she found little companionship in the society of her husband, and was too proud to seek it out of the house, she made me her only counsellor and

friend. I loved my mother with all the strength of my heart. I remember that, when a very little girl, many a night I sobbed myself to sleep because she was not happy, though I was too young to understand why. When I trusted that I had given my heart to the Saviour, it was the one great drawback to my happiness that she, who hitherto had shared with me every joy and sorrow, could not understand my feelings or sympathize in my joy. She never opposed me in my religion. When she found it made me happy, it seemed to gratify her. She encouraged me to teach hymns and passages of Scripture to my little brother and sister, and listened well pleased when they sang their pretty Sunday-school songs. These songs had been Johnny's delight; and in months past, when we sat together of a Sabbath evening, to his oft-repeated request of "Mother, sing too," she would sadly shake her head, and turn away, that she might not see the look of disappointment on his upturned face. Dear child! I think even then he felt his mother's great need, and was groping in a dim way to find that place for her that to his bright, dying eyes was so clearly revealed. They will sing together in heaven.

And now not one link was wanting in the chain of love that bound my mother's heart to mine. Our hopes, our joys, our aspirations, were one. We held long, sweet talks together on subjects which we had never mentioned to each other before. Together we read our Bibles and knelt in prayer. O, how sweet it was to walk to the house of God in company, and to see her sitting in the Sabbath school, a humble learner at the feet of Jesus! Entering into her religion with all her energy of character, my mother became a working Christian, and, in her humble sphere, labored faithfully in the Master's vineyard.

Now, indeed, my cup of happiness seemed full; yet another joy was in store for me.

I was returning in the twilight one May evening, not many weeks after Johnny's death, from a visit to his grave, when Frank Stanley asked me to be his wife. We had known each other from childhood. As long ago as when we used to dig ovens in the sand together and roast apples and ears of corn in them, and build cutby houses and furnish them with bits of broken china, we solemnly promised to marry as soon as ever we were grown. And, I remember, in those days Frank sent me a written declaration of his love, in immense characters, covering half a sheet of foolscap.

"I have loved you ever since I can remember," he said to-night, as we walked home from Johnny's grave. "For years I have had no plan for the future with which you were not connected. Lizzie, will you be my wife?"

Good and noble I knew him to be; quick in temper, but open and generous to a fault. He was a clerk in Mr. Barry's store, and more than once I heard his employer speak of his

strict integrity and good business habits. But Frank was not a Christian. While acknowledging the claims of religion, and to my appeals replying that he knew he ought to attend to the subject, and that he fully intended to do so at an early period, he yet put it off from time to time, waiting for a more convenient opportunity. His mother, a worthy Christian woman, died when he was quite a lad, but old enough to understand and remember the earnest prayers she offered for him on her dying bed. He often spoke of these prayers to me, saying, in a half-trifling, half-serious way, that if God answered the prayers of faith he was sure to be converted. Perhaps he rested his hope of salvation upon them, feeling that God was under obligation to stretch forth His hand and save him, with little or no effort of his own. However this may be, though his outward conduct was unexceptionable, he was living with no fixed religious principle to guide him. Yet I was not afraid to trust my happiness in his keeping. I had no misgivings when I gave the promise he asked. I placed my hand in his trustingly, confidently, and spoke the little word that made us affianced lovers. And as we walked silently homeward, our hearts too full for words, I was a happy girl.

As we passed under an old apple tree that grew by the roadside, a light breeze covered us with the fragrant falling blossoms. In an instant memory carried me back to the orchard behind Farmer Stanley's barn. Two children sat side by side on the green grass weaving garlands of apple blossoms. The boy, bold, black-eyed, barefooted, and bare-headed, stooped to fan, with his torn straw hat, the hot cheeks of his companion, a little blue-eyed girl, in a pink gingham sun-bonnet.

O, that perfume-breathing May! O, the fragrance of those blossoms, telling of the beauty of summer and the golden richness of autumn!

I wish I could stop here. I love to linger in the sunshine of that luxurious home, peaceful, united, and prosperous; in the new-found happiness of a humbler abode, drawing its light from the glory that streams from a little grave; and in the joy of two young hearts who, as yet, have known neither disappointment nor change. I have no heart to leave this sunny path and enter the shadow of the dark wood. But I must tell my story.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MEDICINE—HOW IT WORKS.

"All habits gather by unseen degrees,
As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas."

I pass over two years, and take up the thread of my story.

It was a bright Sabbath morning in June. Doors and windows stood open, and the air was full of the perfume of the climbing roses that covered the veranda. My mistress sat in her room, in a large arm-chair, before the dressing-table. Her eyes were half closed, and her hands folded listlessly on her lap. She had scarcely moved since I left her half an hour before, after braiding her long hair.

Mr. Barry, in his Sunday broadcloth, sat reading his paper as was his custom, and Sam, in a clean white suit, was perched on the window-sill with a Testament in his hand.

He was blundering through his Sunday-school lesson, and varying his employment by observations on what was passing outside. I was busy in my own room, but the door was open, and I heard all that passed.

"And there arose a great storm of wind—'There goes those Pease boys with their tin pails. Now, if that ain't mean! They'll have every strawberry on Stony Hill. Of course all the pleasant days come Sunday. Where was I? O! 'And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship so that it—' Father, did you tell Pat to take Black Bess out this morning? She's lame again in her nigh foot. O, dear! I never shall get this lesson. 'And there arose a great storm.' No, I've said that. O Lizzie, come here a minute and look at Phil; he's got on yellow kid gloves. There now, I've lost my place again. 'And he said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great clam.'"

"A what?" said Mr. Barry, looking up from his paper.

"A clam, father; a great clam," said Sam, innocently. "Why, no, it isn't either; its calm; well, it looked just like clam, anyhow."

"Will that boy never learn to read?" said Mr. Barry.

"O, dear! what dull work it is!" said Sam; "I am sure I pity ministers; I must go and get a drink of water, for I am dry as forty clams."

He cleared three stairs at a jump, and broke into a whistle when he reached the lower hall.

There was silence for a few moments, and then I heard Mr. Barry say, "Come, Clara, it is time you were dressing for church; the bell rang half an hour ago."

She made some inaudible reply, and rose to cross the room. In a moment I heard her fall. Before I could reach her, her husband was at her side.

"Clara, Clara, what is the matter? Lizzie, get the camphor quick. Don't you see she is faint?"

Faint with that color on her cheek and lips! But I humored his fancy to the utmost. I was in an agony to get him out of the way.

"Tell Pat to run quick for Dr. Sharpe Lizzie, how slow you are! Where is that camphor

bottle?" Do you think she could swallow a little brandy?" In his fright Mr. Barry quite forgot to be dignified.

"If you please, sir," I said, "I think the first thing to be done is to get her on the bed." I tried hard to be quiet and self-possessed; but I was trembling from head to foot, though with a different fear from Mr. Barry's.

She opened her eyes as we laid her down, but closed them again immediately, murmuring something, of which we only heard the word "dizzy."

"Yes, that is it," said her husband; I remember now she complained of feeling dizzy when she rose this morning. She tired herself out with that long ride yesterday. The doctor will know what to do for her."

"O, Mr. Barry," I said hastily,—for his hand was on the bell-rope—"will it be best to disturb her now she is sleeping so comfortably? We can tell much better about her when she wakes. It would alarm her very much to find the doctor here. I really think there is nothing serious the matter. I—I—" He was looking me full in the face now. "She has been so once before, sir."

"Been so before?" he said in surprise; "and why was I not told of it?"

"You were out of town, sir, and she was well again directly; and—and—she wished me not to mention it, sir."

"You did very wrong," said Mr. Barry, coldly. It was the first time I ever met his disapproving eyes, and my own filled with tears in spite of myself.

Looking back, now, I can see how greatly I erred, what mistaken kindness it was in me to conceal the truth from her best friend; but I was at my wit's end. To cover it up, to guard her secret, to shield her, to watch her, and keep every one away from her till she was herself again—this was the one absorbing purpose of my heart; and to bring this about, it seemed to me that all means were justifiable; and so I deceived him.

"It was nothing," I said, "a dizzy turn occasioned by a disordered stomach, or a rush of blood to the head, producing giddiness, such as any one might have; if he would trust her with me, I would watch her carefully till she woke, and I was sure she would be all right to-morrow." This and much more to the same purpose.

I was a poor dissembler. The eagerness with which I spoke, and my trepidation of manner, were sufficient in themselves to awaken suspicion. But Mr. Barry was the most unobservant of men; he knew his wife confided in me, and sometimes relied upon my judgment in preference to her own; and he believed and trusted me. God forgive me for betraying that trust.

"Well, perhaps you are right," he said. "I have been dizzy myself sometimes, when I was bilious, and then women have queer

symptoms, that you never can account for. I will wait till she wakes before I send for the doctor."

He was quieted and reassured; and when the bell tolled for church, and she still slept, he was easily persuaded that there was no necessity for his remaining at home. When the door closed behind him, I once more breathed freely, feeling that all immediate danger of discovery was over; and so I shut out the fragrance and the sunshine of that summer morning, and sat down to watch till the "dizzy turn" was over. Alas! it was not the first time. Twice before, with trembling hands, alone, I had half lifted, half dragged her, lifeless and unconscious, to her bed, and, locking the door, kept watch, keeping out all intruders, till she woke, feverish and tremulous, from her dreadful sleep. O, my poor mistress!

Long ago, when Dr. Sharpe first prescribed for her a little stimulant to be taken every day, and I used to prepare it for her, in the delicate wine-glass, making it palatable with loaf sugar and a sprinkling of nutmeg, she would say, after drinking it with a little shudder, "What disagreeable stuff it is! How can people learn to love it?" It was not a pleasant thought, sitting by her bedside that Sabbath morning, looking at her flushed cheek, and listening to her heavy breathing, that from *my* hand she first received the poisonous cup. God forgive me! I did it ignorantly. I used to joke with her after a while about getting bravely over her dislike for it; and when the habit grew, and she would sometimes say in the middle of the forenoon, "Lizzie, isn't it time for my Bourbon?" I would laugh gayly and utter some silly jest. I rejoiced to see her gaining every day, her step elastic, and the fresh color coming to her cheek. It was *my* hand that filled her decanters from the cask in Mr. Barry's cellar marked "Chadwick's Best;" and more than once I placed the wicker-covered bottle in her travelling-basket, stowing it safely with the sandwiches and articles for the toilet, when she started on a journey. Sitting by her bedside that morning, I could have bitten the hand that did such cruel deeds.

Fool that I was not to take the alarm; not to notice how fast the decanters were emptied; how my visits to the cellar grew more and more frequent; how she felt "faint," or "languid," or "nervous," or "chilly," many times a day, cheating herself and me into the belief that she needed "a little Bourbon!" I do not remember what roused me to a sense of her danger. I know, when the thought first entered my mind, I drove it out as something monstrous. How one in humble life, poor and uneducated, could become enslaved by a low appetite, I could, by sad experience, well understand; how one maddened by oppression, or in great sorrow, might be tempted to find comfort and oblivion in drink, I

could readily conceive; but she, beautiful, educated, refined, in her home of luxury, removed from every care and sorrow,—the thought was inconceivable. I put it away from me; I was angry with myself for admitting it; and when one day, Sam, sitting in his favorite position on the floor, with his head in her lap, said "Mother, your breath to-day is like old Huld's," I could have beaten the boy for speaking of the two in such a connection. But the time came when I woke partially to the truth. I did not realize the extent of her danger; but I knew enough to make me wretched, I could not keep my secret long, for every time she took the glass from my hand my face betrayed me, and when she questioned me I hinted to her my fears. She was not angry; she treated the matter lightly, called me a silly girl, and said I was making a great fuss about a little thing. "How ridiculous it was, to be sure! How angry Mr. Barry would be if he knew I had hinted such a thing! I was never to mention it to a soul, would I promise?" I gave my word, and the secret was between us. But from that day there was a shadow between us, too. It was not that she was less kind, for if possible she was more so; but I felt that she no longer trusted me. Indeed I think we watched each other. I was called upon less frequently to fill her glass; but the contents disappeared rapidly, and I know she made errands for me down stairs, to get me out of the way.

At length, one morning, coming in from a walk, I found her half lying, half sitting, with closed eyes, in her chair. When I spoke she tried to rouse herself, but slid softly down in an insensible heap upon the floor. I flew to the door, and locked it, then lifted her, limp and lifeless, to the bed. All that day I watched her, keeping every one away,—this was not difficult, for Mr. Barry was out of town,—and in the evening, when she was quite herself, I knelt by her bedside and pleaded with her, for the sake of her husband and her children, for the sake of her dear baby in heaven, for the sake of her dear Saviour and her God, to break up the dreadful habit. I appealed with all the strength of language I could command to her Christian principle. Love gave me boldness of speech. If I could but rouse her to a sense of her danger,—if I could but lead her to see how she was sinning against her conscience and her God,—I cared not what the consequences to me might be. But she was not angry. She admitted the truth of all I said. She did not treat it lightly this time. She promised me with tears and sobs, that she would try. But when I begged her to tell her husband, that he might help her, the bare idea terrified her.

"He does not dream of such a thing," she said; "and I should die with shame to have him know it. O Lizzie, the secret is between you and me. Be my good friend and help me to keep it."

After this appeal I would have died sooner than betray her; but *was* the secret between us two?

Then I asked leave to put the decanter away; and as I had heard it was injurious to stop the habit suddenly, I proposed to deal out small doses to her, giving her less and less every day. I felt ashamed to assume so much authority; but she agreed to it all, and was as docile as a child, and for a week I felt very hopeful. Then came a change. She was restless, impatient, fretful, and the night before this last "dizzy turn" I saw by her face she had been drinking. The decanter I knew she had not touched, but the cask was in the cellar, and I doubted not she had drawn a supply for herself.

O, what should I do! I walked the room that Sabbath morning,—I could not sit still,—wringing my hands in my distress. She was no longer to be trusted, neither could I carry the burden of the secret. Help must come from the outside. Should I tell Mr. Barry? I thought of her pleading face, and his so stern and angry; of her words, "I should die with shame to have him know it." No I could not tell him.

The air of the room choked me. I threw up the sash, and stepped out upon the veranda, carefully closing the blinds behind me. Philip Barry stood on the gravel walk just beneath. He saw me, and it was too late to retreat, though my first impulse was to do so. A petted and spoilt child, supplied with every gratification that money could purchase, with parents who doted upon him, and who were strangely blind to his faults, it is no wonder that he grew up proud, selfish, and overbearing. He was wild and dissipated, too, and his course gave his father many anxious hours, I know; for though, in speaking to his wife, he always made light of her fears, assuring her that all young men of spirit must sow their wild oats, and that the boy would sober down fast enough, I heard him talking once to Philip himself, in a very different strain; and I think he found a situation in a mercantile house in the city for him, chiefly to take him from his evil associates in the village. He was exceedingly disagreeable to me; and as he was now spending a few weeks at home, I was frequently much annoyed by his odious attentions. "Hallo, Lizzie," he called to me as soon as he saw me, "run and get your bonnet, and take a ride. Black Bess is harnessed in the stable, and we have plenty of time for a turn before the old folks get back from church."

I would not condescend to tell him I was watching by his sick mother, but answered, coldly enough, that I did not care to go.

"No, of course not," he said; "it is always

so when I ask you to go anywhere; you tell a different story when young Stanley's round. Jim Barton's daughter is very particular what company she keeps. I say,"—for I had turned my back to him, and was trying, with angry haste, to undo the fastening of the blind and get inside,—"young S. got tight last night on lager beer, and we cleaned him out handsomely in a couple of games of euchre. Ha, ha! now he'll catch it." It needed but this. I sat down on the carpet by Mrs. Barry's bedside and cried as if my heart would break. It was not the first time I had heard of Frank in a lager beer saloon. Was all the sorrow I knew in life to come from drink? A sigh from Mrs. Barry recalled me. It was selfish to think of my own troubles at such a time, and I went back to my former train of thought.

Suddenly it occurred to me to go to Dr. Sharpe. Why had I not thought of that before? He was wise and skilful, and had already acquired a reputation in the community for medical learning. He was the family physician, and necessarily well acquainted with the ways of the household. He was Mr. Barry's intimate friend, though there was some rivalry between them regarding a State office to which both aspired; but it was in a good-natured way, and did not interfere with their friendship. If any one could help my mistress, it was Dr. Sharpe; and to the doctor I resolved I would go, give him my confidence, and solicit his aid. But I did not like to take this step without Mr. Barry's consent; and accordingly, after tea, when Mrs. Barry, weak and languid, but quite herself again, sat in her arm-chair by the open window, I took occasion to speak with him alone. I asked leave to call at the doctor's on my way home; my Sabbath evenings I always spent with my mother.

"I should like to tell him about Mrs. Barry, if you please, sir," I said; "she is nervous, and I think a visit from him would agitate her; but he ought to know, and I can describe her symptoms perfectly."

Mr. Barry graciously assented. I think he wished to make amends for his severity to me in the morning.

When I went to my pleasant room to arrange my dress for the evening, everything reminded me of Mrs. Barry's thoughtful kindness. She placed the pretty vase on my table that I might always have fresh flowers in my room. The book of devotional poetry was her gift, and my name, in her delicate handwriting, was on the title page. Even the shell comb with which I confined my hair she gave me. My dear mistress! I donned my muslin dress, and tied in my hair the cherry ribbon Frank Stanley loved to see me wear. How could I meet him to-night?

CHAPTER IX.

THE CRUEL LAUGH.

"Do not insult humanity;
It is a barbarous grossness to lay on
The weight of scorn, when heavy misery
Too much already weighs men's fortunes down."
Daniel.

Dr. Sharpe sat in his office chair, his feet on the sill of the open window. The room looked very professional, with big books scattered about, and a row of shelves against the wall, full of gallipots and bottles.

He answered my timid knock by a loud "Come in," and I stood before him.

"My name is Lizzie Barton," I said, for he did not appear to recognize me. "You have seen me at Mr. Barry's, sir."

"Yes, so I have," said the doctor. "I remember you now. They are all well, I trust, at my friend Barry's."

"Mrs Barry is very unwell, sir."

"Ah," said the doctor; "a sudden attack. I met her yesterday, and thought her looking finely. I will step round directly."

"If you please, doctor," I said, and stopped. He had risen from his seat, and stood hat in hand. "I think—I believe—in fact, they did not send for you, sir," I stammered out. "They do not know I am here, or at least Mrs. Barry does not. I asked Mr. Barry's leave to consult you, and—" I stopped again.

"What is all this about?" said Dr. Sharpe, a little impatiently. "They want me, and they don't want me; they send you for me, and they don't know you are here. I do not understand. Will you please to explain yourself?"

"Doctor," I said, desperation giving me courage, "we are in great trouble, and I have come to you for help. If you will please to sit down again, I will tell you about it. The medicine you prescribed for Mrs. Barry,"—I could not bear to call it by name,—"which seemed to do her so much good, is injuring her very much."

"Medicine! What medicine, girl?" said Dr. Sharpe, staring as if he thought my wits had forsaken me.

"The whiskey, sir—the Bourbon whiskey."

"Nonsense. Barry told me, not three days ago, that he ascribed her recovery to the use of stimulants."

"Doctor, he does not know. He thinks it is all right. She has kept it from him. But I am with her all the time, and I know she is in danger."

"You don't mean to say she likes it too well, and takes more than is good for her?" said Dr. Sharpe.

I came close to him, and, lowering my voice almost to a whisper, told him that, not once, or twice, but many times, I had seen her overcome by liquor.

To my utter horror and indignation, Dr.

Sharpe leaned back in his chair, and laughed heartily.

"Well, well," he said, "for a lady in the upper walk of society, that is going it pretty strong, to be sure. There's a pill for Barry to swallow. By George! if the story gets round, it will tell on his votes in the county next fall."

My presence was no check to his mirth. In his intense enjoyment of the joke, I think he forgot it altogether, or he thought me too insignificant to be noticed. Through the interview there was in his words and manner so little of the professional dignity he usually carried that he hardly seemed himself. I waited in burning indignation.

"Dr. Sharpe," I said at last, "I came to you in confidence, and I appeal to you, as a man of honor, not to reveal what I have told you to-night. I supposed that, as a physician, and as a friend of the family, I might with safety ask you for counsel and help. I have put Mrs. Barry's good name in your hands. I am sure you will never be so dishonorable as to betray the trust."

"I beg your pardon," said Dr. Sharpe, sobering instantly. "I am afraid I seemed rude. The whole thing struck me in a ludicrous light. I assure you I have the highest regard for Mr. Barry, and a great admiration for his wife. I shall be happy to aid and counsel them, to the best of my ability. Now, Miss Lizzie, will you tell me what I can do for you?"

"If you will *undo* what has already been done," I said, still in burning indignation, "and cure that unhappy lady of a habit that has become second nature to her, I will try to forget the cruellest laugh I ever heard in my life. Sir, she trusted and believed in you. She called you her 'dear doctor,' her 'good friend.' She would have drunk a cup of poison, had you bidden her; and it *was* poison you gave her to drink."

The doctor flushed to his temples.

"From the account you give me," he said, very stiffly, "I judge that my friend Mrs. Barry is suffering from the excessive use, or abuse, of a very good thing. I would counsel her to great moderation. To Miss Lizzie Barton I would particularly counsel moderation in language. Good evening;" and he bowed me out of the office.

I walked away in the opposite direction from my mother's house. I could not meet her or Frank quite yet. I walked very fast, trying to get away from my own reproachful thoughts. Fool that I was to trust my secret with that man! Cold and heartless as he had just proved himself to be, what use might he not make of it? I pictured him at his next wine-party, retailing it as a choice joke, to his political friends; making capital out of it, and using it to Mr. Barry's disadvantage. I was wild with disappointment and vexation. From force of habit,—for I did not

think where I was going,—I opened the gate of the cemetery, and in a few minutes stood by Johnny's grave. The Sabbath stillness of the spot, and its hallowed associations, quieted me directly. It was no place for bitter, angry thoughts. One must needs be forgiving at the grave of a little child. I thought of our darling, his beautiful, sunny life, and its peaceful end; and how soon, for all of us, the trials that seem so hard to bear now would be over, and we, perhaps, from our happy rest in heaven, looking back, would wonder that such trifles could vex us. I spent a profitable half hour at the little grave, and, calmed and comforted, left the spot.

Outside the gate I met Frank, coming in search of me. "Your mother began to feel anxious," he said, "and think something had happened at the Barrys to detain you. I was going up to see, but my good angel sent me here first."

He was in great spirits, flushed and handsome after his rapid walk; and so glad to see me, and so happy in my society, that I shrank from the task before me. Not noticing my reserve, for a while he did all the talking. He had good news, he said, to tell me. The head clerk was about leaving, going to New York on a higher salary, and Mr. Barry had offered him the vacancy, with a large increase of salary. Wasn't that good news? His black eyes danced and sparkled, and he threw his cap in the air with boyish glee. "But Lizzie," suddenly noticing my silence, "how sober you are! You don't seem glad a bit."

"Frank, may I ask you a question?"

"Of course you may, 'most grave and reverend judge,' and then it will be my turn; and I will ask a question that will require an answer on the spot."

"Frank, were you at Turner's saloon last night?"

"Yes, I was in for an hour or two. Why?"

"And did you play cards with Phil Barry and his set, and lose all your money?"

"Pooh! I only had a little loose change in my pocket, not over two dollars. How did you find all this out?"

"Phil Barry told me this morning."

"Lizzie," said Frank, quickly, "if you knew all that I know about Phil Barry, you would never speak to him as long as you live. He isn't fit for a decent woman to look at."

"I never speak to him, if I can help it, Frank. But why do you associate with such a character?"

"O, it is different in my case. I am obliged to speak to him in the store every day. But he is no favorite of mine, I assure you, and, I suppose, he likes me less than ever now."

"Why, what have you done?"

"Well, you see, he helped himself to money out of the drawer the other day, and I happened to see him. All we take goes to the

cashier's desk, you know, before it goes into the drawer. So I knew that when the cash account came to be balanced at night, there would be just so much money missing. There was only the boy and I in the store that day, and of course it would be laid to one of us. So I stepped in to Mr. Barry and told what I saw. Phil was mad; he cursed me up hill and down. But he has got over it, or, at least, he seemed good-natured last night."

"Frank, you promised me you never would play for money again."

"Well, that's a fact, Lizzie; and I didn't mean to. But, you see, they got to treating all round, and I felt happy over my improved prospects, you know, and—well, the fact is, I did take a little too much, and forgot myself. Now, Lizzie, I am sorry, and I promise you it shall be the last time. What more can I say? O, you cross girl! do make it up with me! I thought you would be so pleased at my good luck, and we would be so happy to-night! And now you spoil it all. I tell you what, Lizzie, by and by you shall have it all your own way. No fear of my going to Turner's, or anywhere else of an evening then. But you can't think how dull it is, these warm nights, in a close little room in a boarding-house! A young fellow, shut up in the store all day, must have somewhere to spend his evenings. Of course, I am not defending myself for what happened last night. I ought to have left the liquor alone, and the cards too, for that matter. Lizzie, you will cure all my bad habits for me—won't you?"

"Frank," I said, "do you remember how, more than a year ago, when you first began to go to the lager beer saloon, to play a quiet game of cards, as you said, with the boys—how I felt about it, what I feared, and how you promised me then to break away, not because you thought there was any danger,—you laughed at the idea,—but because I wished it, and you said you would do anything to please me? Did you keep your promise? And after the sleigh-ride, you remember what happened then. I don't like to remind you of it, or how angry and ashamed you felt the next day; but you remember how, after that disgraceful affair, you promised me never to touch anything that would intoxicate again. Was that promise kept? and is it likely I shall have more influence with you by and by than now?"

"Lizzie, you are as solemn as the day of judgment, bringing up all a fellow's past sins. Of course you will have more influence with me by and by, when you are with me all the time, than now. You have the most extravagant notions on this subject. You seem to think if a young man steps into a saloon, now and then, and takes a social glass with his companions, he is on the high road to ruin. You don't understand the usages of society. Why, Lizzie, everybody drinks. There is hardly a young man of my acquaintance who

spends as little money as I for liquor. You ought to see Phil Barry and his set carry on. You can't expect young men to be old ones. Everybody must sow their wild oats, you know. But, Lizzie, I do really mean to sober down, and—

"Frank, I have used all the influence over you I possess, to induce you to give up a habit that has grown upon you very fast. Last night's experience is only one instance of my failure. It is all folly to talk about my having more influence over you by and by than now. What you will not do for me now, you are not likely to do for me then. Frank, I dare not trust my happiness in your hands; give me back my promise."

"What?"

"Give me back the promise I made you two years ago. I cannot be your wife."

"Lizzie, you don't mean it! You cannot mean it. You are vexed now; but you will think better of it. After all these years, you have no right to throw me off in a sudden freak."

"Frank, it is no sudden freak. I told you six months ago, you must give up your ager beer, or give up me."

"You knew I did not believe you. I never thought you meant what you said. O, Lizzie, we have known each other so long! We have been so happy together!"

His pleading eyes were fastened on my face, and I turned away, that he might not see my tears.

"If you loved me," he said, "you could not give me up so easily."

I think I never loved him half so well as when he wronged me by the doubt; but I did not reply. We passed, just then, under the shadow of the old apple tree which two years before covered us with its blossoms. No blossoms fell on us to-night; only a leaf or two, prematurely withered, dropped at our feet.

"Lizzie," said Frank, suddenly, "if I thought Phil Barry—" and there he stopped.

"If you thought what, Frank?" I said, gently.

"He takes a deal of trouble, it seems to me, to inform you of my short-comings. You would never have known of last night's affair but for him."

"Would you have kept it from me, Frank?"

"I should like to tell my own story," he said, a little sulkily, "if it must be told at all." Then suddenly grasping my arm, while his eyes fairly blazed in the twilight, he said, "Have you given me up for *him*? Could Lizzie Barton be tempted by that fellow's money?"

I scorned to answer such a charge.

"No," he said, "it cannot be. And yet it is a strange reason for a girl with your past history to give."

"O Frank, this from you! It is my know-

ledge of the past," I said, gently, "that makes me timid for the future. It is because one far more worthy of a happy lot than I am, trusted just such promises as you have made me to-night, and was bitterly disappointed, that I ask to be released from mine."

Something in this reply stung him.

"If this is your trust and confidence in me," he replied, his voice trembling with passion, "it is time we parted. Take back your promise, you false, cruel girl! You might have saved me. God knows I loved you well enough to be anything you wished; but you have made a desperate man of me to-night."

He flung my arm from him, and left me standing alone in the darkness.

CHAPTER X.

BLOOD.

"True is that whilom that good poet said,
That gentle mind by gentle deed is known;
For man by nothing is so well bewrayed
As by his manners, in which plain is shown
Of what degree and what race he is grown,"
Spenser.

"Even to the delicacy of their hands
There was resemblance, such as true blood
wears."

Byron.

The next morning, after breakfast, I found Huldah in the kitchen.

"Where's your elder buds, and alder buds, and all the rest?" said Sam, for she came empty-handed.

"I left 'em down to Miss Isham's, to make yarb tea," said Huldah.

"Is Mistress Isham sick?" inquired Bridget.

"That poor cretur," said Huldah, "is in sich a condition that she despises herself in her own and everybody's company."

"Och, an' what ails her?"

"Narves," said Huldah.

Bridget's honest face bore so puzzled a look, that Huldah repeated, in a higher key, "Narves."

Bridget suggested pain-killer.

"That are doctor," said Huldah, condescending to explain, "he calls it neuralgic, or some sich name; but I call it narves. What with a jumpin' an' twitchin' in her jaw, an' a whizzin' inside of her head, an' a scringin' in her ear, an' the cold chills runnin' up an' down her back, an' a mizry all over, she's the distressed-est cretur I ever did see."

"How did she catch it?" said Sam.

"Waitin' an' tendin', an' contrivin'," said Huldah. "Land! to see them five young 'uns o' hern, so nigh of an age yer can't tell which's the youngest, racketin' all over the house, up chamber an' down cellar, straddlin' the sofa, an' makin' horses of the keepin-room cheers, and scaldin' themselves with the tea-kettle, an' cuttin' up all manner o' shines, an' that poor soul on the tight jump arter 'em the hull

day, if it ain't enough to gin the neuralgic an' all the other aligies, I'm beat. The wonder is she ain't dead long ago. Sez I to her, 'Mis' Isham,' sez I, 'I hope, when you git to heaven, there won't be a young 'un within forty miles of yer.' 'Law, Huldah,' sez she, 'I don't know as I care about goin' to heaven right away, when I die. If the Lord's willin', sez that poor worn-out soul, sez she, 'I should like to lay in the grave a hundred years or so, an' git rested.' It's my opinion," said Huldah, "an' I've been a-thinkin' about it considerable lately, that wimmin suffer for all their sins in this ere present life, an' will have an easy time on't in the day o' judgment."

She followed me when I left the room.

"How's Mis' Barry?" she asked.

"Better," I replied, and tried to pass, for I felt that I must cry, if I was looked at or spoken to that Monday morning.

She eyed me keenly from under her heavy brows.

"She's wuss," she said; then pushing me, though not roughly, into a little room at the end of the hall, she closed the door, and planting herself before it, said,—

"Now, you Barton gal, tell me the hull story. Yer needn't look so scart; I've known about it these six months; there now," said Huldah, thoroughly disgusted, "if she ain't a-goin' to cry I what babies wimmin be! Here, you set down in this ere cheer, an' have a good spell on't, an' then mebbe you'll act like a rational crittur."

I availed myself of the permission so ungraciously given. Since my interview with Frank, the previous evening, I felt utterly friendless and forlorn; and now the certainty that this vagrant woman had possessed herself of the secret I hoped was known only to Dr. Sharpe and myself filled me with anguish and shame. Huldah stood quietly by till the proxysm was over. I think once or twice her hand rested on my bowed head with no ungentle touch.

"Now you are all right," she said, when I looked up, half ashamed, and tried to smile.

"When a woman gits hystreeky there ain't no use holdin' on't in an' chokin' on't down. Hystreeks is like measles, wuss inside than out. 'Gin'em plenty o' sarfon tea,' sez I to Mis' Isham, when her young 'uns was comin' down with 'em, 'an' fetch 'em out. An' so, when I see that pore cretur, clear tuckered out with housework an' babies, goin' round the kitchen, keepin' her mouth shet tight, an' every now an' then swallerin' a big lump in her throat,' Mis' Isham,' sez I, 'koller it right out, an' make an' eend on't.' An' I never said them words to her but she bust right out a cryin', as you did jest now, an' it done her good. An' I've a notion," said Huldah, making a personal application of her subject, "that it's what you'd better do with this ere load o' trouble you've been luggin' round inside o' yer for a long spell back. Come, talk it out, gal."

"Huldah," I said, "what did you mean just now, when you said you knew about it six months ago?"

"Well, child, last fall, when I was chorin' round, I went in one day to ax Mis' Barry what I should do with that big bag o' feathers in the wood-shed chamber. I opened the door kinder sudding, an' she was a-lyin' on the bed, an' I see her chuck a big bottle under the piller; an' if ever I smelt whiskey I smelt it in that ere room. Well, it sot me watchin', and arter that I see a plenty."

"Do you think any one else suspects it, Huldah?"

"Child, you can't cork up lightnin'. One day I was goin' round the back side o' the house, jest as two ladies was a-comin' out o' the front door; one on 'em was that Clair woman, I didn't know t'other one. Mis' Barry, she was a-waitin' on 'em out, an' she stood in the door, not quiet an' genteel like as she used to be, but bowin' an' smilin', an' her tongue a-runnin' like a mill-wheel. Well, when their backs was turned to her, I see that Clair woman pullin' faces an' winkin' at t'other one."

"O Huldah, what shall we do?"

"Well, I don't reckon there's much to be done. She's got to that pint when she can't no more stop than you can live without eatin'. You see," said Huldah, mysteriously—"it's blood!"

"What do you mean, Huldah? She belongs to one of the first families in the State of Connecticut."

"Good land! child, you can't tell nothin' 'bout Clary Hopkins's family. I knew Square Hopkins long afore you was born; an' the old major, his father, died four years arter I come from York State. They was both good men, but they was high livers. Many's the cask o' wine an' French brandy I've seen carted down the old major's cellar. Them men both died afore they was sixty year old. Apoplexy the doctors called it. I called it rum fits. The Hopkineses was all jes so; it runs in the family. No danger t'other side o' the house," said Huldah, with a toss of her head; "them keeful, cold-blooded, money-gittin' folks ain't no call to be tempted. It's the free, open-handed, fond o' good livin' an' good company kind, that stands a chance to go wrong. He won't never take to drinkin'."

There was an under-tone of contempt in Huldah's language whenever she spoke of Mr. Barry. Prond of her patron's family, she could never quite forgive her husband for being a self-made man, raising himself from humble life to the high position he now held in the community. "You kin tell a born gentleman," said Huldah, "if you find him in a pig-sty, an' dressed in blue cotton homespun, 'caus what Natur' does, she does sure; but livin' in a grand house, an' wearin' broad-cloth, an' stickin' a diamond pin in yer shirt buzzum, don't make yer a gentleman—does it? What yer ain't got yer can't git, and yer

can't make a whistle out of a pig's tail." This by the way.

"He won't never take to drinkin'," said Huldah; "But soon's ever I smelt whiskey in Mis' Barry's chamber, and see her chuck that bottle out o' sight, sez I to myself, 'Clary Hopkins,' sez I, you are in a dretful bad way. That old Hopkins blood o' yourn'll be the death on yer yit. 'The Lord visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation.' Why, child, I've seen the dretfulest sins handed down in good, respectable families. I knew a woman out in York State that was light-fingered when she was young; but she got convarted in a camp-meetin' an' jined the Church, an' there warn't a nicer woman anywhere round. Well, she married an elder in the church, an' they went down to Orange County to live; but the only child they ever had would steal everything she could lay her hands on. She begun, I was goin' to say, afore she could run alone; leastways, by the time she was two year old she began to steal candy out of her mother's drawer, an' pick up odd pennies round the house. It nigh about broke her mother's heart, for she kep' a-growin' wuss an' wuss, yer see, an' it didn't do no manner o' good to whip her, or to shet her up and keep her on bread an' water. 'Caus' why? 'Twas blood. Well, she grew up a tall, harnsome-lookin' gal, an' she married a rich man down in Utiky, an' he gin her everything heart could wish; but law! it didn't make no difference, for every once in a while he had to go round to the shops payin' bills to the marchants for things his wife stole; for they got to know her habits so well, yer see, they used to watch her soon's ever she come into the shop, an' whatever she'd chuck away they'd clap it down on paper, an' her husband he'd foot the bill. An' that crittur couldn't help it no more'n you can help eatin' when yer hungry. 'Caus' why? 'twas blood."

"But Mrs. Barry did not like the taste of liquor at first," I said. "She really had to learn to love it."

"Now that's the wuss thing about it," said Huldah; "that woman might a' gone all her life an' never found out the hankerin' she had inside on her. 'Twas there, yer see, kinder sleepin, like; an' if it hadn't got roused up, it never would a' pestered her in the world. 'Twas feedin' on't did the mischief. It makes me think of a story father used to tell.

"There was a feller up in Herkimer County come across a wildcat's den, way up on the mounting, one day; an' what does he do but fetch one o' the cubs home for a plaything for his young 'uns? He kep' it till 'twas grown, feedin' it jes as he would a common cat. 'Twas the gentlest, sleekest, purtiest crittur. To see it playin' round the house, rollin' 'ver an' over, a frolickin' with them children, an' actilly sleepin' with the baby in the cradle, yer wouldn't a'thought it had any

teeth or claws. But one day, when they was a'slaughterin', one o' the children gin it a hunk o' raw meat. That crittur got a taste o' blood. Then, sez I, look out for the natur' o' the beast. No more purrin, or foolin' an' frolickin' on the floor with the children. All the old mother wildcat, hid away inside there so long, woke right up, and there was a fierce, savage crittur out o' the woods ready to tear an' to eat. 'Twas feedin' on't did the mischief. An' that are doctor when he told Clary Hopkins to drink whiskey every day, he fed a crittur inside of her wuss'n a wildcat out o' the woods ready to bite an' to tear. He didn't do a very sharp thing that time. Sharp!" said Huldah, shaking her fist; "I'll sharp him!"

"What ought I to do, Huldah?"

"It's plain enough to see her ought to tell him." She meant Mr. Barry. "How in the world, if the man had his wits about him, he could help finding it out long ago, I don't see."

"He is away from home half the time, you know, and when he is here, his mind is on his business, and besides, lately, she has been very —" sly, I was going to say; but I did not like to apply the word to my mistress.

"Yes, I understand," said Huldah, with a knowing look; "they allers be. Liquor kinder twists a body's conscience round, an' they git to cheatin' their best friends, an' doin' things in a dretful sly, underhanded kind of a way."

No one would suspect from her words t'at Huldah be'onged to the class she referred to as "they;" but during this interview, the small room was filled with the fumes of the gin she had drank that morning. Up to a certain point, liquor sharpened her intellect and increased her physical strength. Half an hour after, I found her scrubbing away in the midst of an ocean of soap suds, and Sam throwing old shoes at her across the waste of waters.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DISCOVERY.

"He stood,
Pierced by severe amazement, bating life,
Speechless and fixed in all the death of woe,"
Thomson.

An hour later, as I sat with my mistress, the front door slammed violently, and some one came upstairs with a quick, uneven step. It was so unlike Mr. Barry's usual dignified, deliberate way, that I could not think it was he, till he opened the door of his wife's room. His usually florid face was white to the lips. In a peremptory tone he ordered me to leave the room, and stamped his foot impatiently, as I delayed a moment to gather up my sewing materials. One quick glance I gave my

mistress. She looked ready to faint, and was holding up both trembling hands as though warding off a blow.

I kept within sound of the bell, which I knew he would ring for me by and by, and the half hour that followed was agony. It seemed to me that I could not wait, but must break in upon this dreadful interview; and yet, when at length the bell rang with a quick, angry clang, I almost crept up stairs, and lingered with my hand on the door-knob. Then I heard a sound of distress within, and sprang to the bedside. Mrs. Barry's face was buried in the pillows, and she was crying and laughing in the same breath. Mr. Barry left the room without a word.

"O Lizzie," she cried, when the hysterical paroxysm was over; "he knows it all; Dr. Sharpe has told him; what shall I do? what shall I do?"

I was quite prepared for this revelation, and relieved to hear that it was over. She did not ask how Dr. Sharpe found out the secret. In her agitation she never thought of it; but her terror at her husband's anger, her shame and self-reproach, and her utter want of resolution and strength of purpose, and the despair with which she spoke of herself, were very sad to witness. For a while she would listen to nothing I said to her; but as she grew calm, I sat by her bedside, and determined to add my appeal to her husband's.

"Mrs. Barry," I said, "I am glad your husband knows it all."

She looked at me in astonishment.

"I believe, if you will lean on his strength, and trust to him fully," said I, "that, with the help of God, he will save you. You and I have tried, and failed utterly. We are two weak women, and this dreadful habit is too strong for us; but Mr. Barry is resolute and determined; people say he never fails in what he undertakes to do. O Mrs. Barry, it is a good thing for him to know it all."

"He was fearfully angry," she said; "he pities and despises me;" and she fell to shuddering and sobbing again.

"But he loves you; he would give his life to save you. Mrs. Barry, do try and listen to me;" for she was growing hysterical again. "I have seen you so strong and self-reliant before! O, where is your courage now? Have you thought how, if this goes on, it must end? how impossible it will be to keep the secret much longer in the bosom of your own family? Are you willing to have your name bandied about, from mouth to mouth, through the town? Will you bring such a dreadful disgrace upon your husband? Will you have it said to your sons, as they grow up to manhood, that their mother is a—"

"Stop!" said Mrs. Barry; "girl, you will drive me mad. 'Have I thought how this will end?' Yes, I have thought how it will end. I look forward, and this is what I see: my husband's name dishonored, and his bitter,

burning indignation; my children ashamed to call me mother; the grief of friends; the scorn and indignation of the world; my own heart filled with an anguish of remorse that no words can utter and no other soul feel; my utter ruin on earth, and hell's gates wide open before me, for God has written my sentence with His own hand—'No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God.' This is what I see."

"And seeing all this," I said, "can you keep on? Dare you pursue a course that will bring such ruin upon yourself and those nearest and dearest to you? O Mrs. Barry, if you love your husband and children, if you love the memory of your sweet baby and hope to meet her in heaven, if you love your own soul, if you fear God's everlasting wrath, if you hate hell and long for heaven, in God's name stop."

"I cannot," said this wretched woman; "I would lay down my life, I would die chopped in pieces, for salvation from this. I resolve and re-resolve. I rise and fall, and rise only to fall again, every time a little lower, and with keener anguish and bitterness of soul. I go without a little while, and there comes a dreadful gnawing and burning that is insupportable. I know it is killing me, body and soul; but I *must have it*."

I thought of the roused demon of drink within her, her cruel inheritance, the curse that came to her through her proud old father's blood. What atonement could his money and his lands make for this? I thought how Huldah had likened it to a savage wild beast, a live creature with claws, digging into her heart, tearing at her vitals, and raging for her life-blood.

"Pray Mrs. Barry," I said. "O, pray, as you never prayed before, for deliverance, for strength to overcome this dreadful temptation; fight it as you would fight the deadliest sin; for I believe the great adversary of souls is seeking to destroy you forever. You are not tempted of man, and only God can help you; and He will help you. O Mrs. Barry, my dear mistress, my kind friend, do not be angry with me; let me plead with you. I know you are a Christian. I have seen your faith in God, your love for your Saviour, your beautiful, consistent, Christian life, these years that I have lived with you. Will you give all this up, lose the sweet comfort of your religion, and go down to your grave in despair? Fly to God, and He will save you."

"It is too late!" She cried. "O, it is too late! I wish I had never been born."

I left her with these words of despair upon her lips, for there came a summons to me from Mr. Barry.

He was waiting to speak with me in the library, and I went to him with trembling steps. I knew he was a stern, proud man, strong, self-reliant, and unyielding; that he exacted prompt and full obedience from all

under his authority, and was a good master to those who did their duty, but relentlessly severe to delinquents. I knew this; but not from experience, for in his intercourse with his family these peculiarities did not appear. Once or twice I heard him speak sternly to his eldest son; but his rebukes were mild in proportion to the offence. To me, as his wife's attendant and humble friend, he was uniformly kind, and, I think, liked to see me with her.

When I entered the room, he stood resting one hand on the table. Pride, anger, and shame were struggling in his face. He fixed his eye sternly upon me for a moment before he spoke.

"Do you know why I have sent for you?"

he said.

I tried to speak, but the words died on my lips.

"I shall not reproach you, young woman," he said. "I think your conscience will do that without my help. I will only say, that if what I have learned on the street to-day had been told me, months ago, by a member of my family, from whom I had a right to expect that amount of confidence, my task and your self-reproach would be lighter to-day. Your motive for all this concealment I do not pretend to fathom. Your course of duplicity and deceit—"

"O Mr. Barry," I cried, "hear me one moment." His cruel words cut me to the heart.

"Be still," he said; "I want no excuses or extenuations. Facts speak for themselves. Only yesterday you deliberately deceived me. Young woman, I never forgive deceit. My first thought was to send you away in disgrace, for you have abused the trust reposed in you, and forfeited all claim to my confidence. But your mistress has pleaded for you, and your good conduct in all other particulars I have taken into consideration, and I will give you the opportunity to atone, in some measure, by faithfulness in the future, for your errors in the past. Don't interrupt me. I can judge of your penitence by the manner in which you perform the service I shall require of you."

He spoke like a master to his slave. His words were cruel, but his stern, relentless face, and his cold, bitter tone, were worse to bear. In the midst of my self-reproach, I felt that he was unjust to me; but I was much too sad to speak otherwise than humbly.

"Mr Barry," I said, "if you will listen to me one moment, I will promise not to try to excuse myself. You shall think as badly of me as you please, only this I must say: However much I may have forfeited your confidence, and merited your displeasure, never, for one moment, have I faltered in my love to the

dearest, the kindest mistress in the world. O sir, I have tried to serve her faithfully. I do love her with all my heart!" My voice faltered, but I determined I would not break down. "Let me stay with her; don't send me away while she is so unhappy. Tell me what I can do for her, and see how hard I will try to serve her. Mr. Barry, you will believe and trust me so far?"

"And if I do," he said, coldly, "what pledge can you give me that I may rely on you for the future? How do I know but these promises you make so freely are only the hypocritical cover to a further course of concealment and deceit?"

I felt my cheeks burn, and, for the first time during the interview, I was in danger of forgetting myself. He waited a moment for me to speak, and then continued:—

"As the first proof of your sincerity," he said, "I wish you to give me the history of this unhappy affair from the commencement. Remember, no excuses, no extenuations, but the plain, simple narrative." He motioned me to be seated,—we were both standing all this time—and took his own chair opposite me.

It was not an easy story to tell. I hesitated, and my voice faltered more than once; but I concealed nothing. I described briefly, but as vividly as I could, the power this appetite had gained over her, and her seeming helplessness in its grasp. I did not raise my eyes to his face while I was speaking, and he heard me silently to the end. When I had finished, there were signs of emotion in his face.

"You love her," he said, almost kindly, "and you want to save her—do you not?"

"O Mr. Barry, I love her with all my heart. If you will tell me what I can do to save her—" The tears I had kept back through this interview flowed freely.

"I will," he said. "What she has not resolution to do for herself must be done for her. We will watch her, night and day, and see that not one drop of liquor passes her lips. It must be kept from her entirely."

"It will be impossible, sir," I said, "while there is so much of it in the house."

"I will take care of that," he said. "All in the cellar shall be removed; and I do you search every nook and corner, and break every bottle of it you find. And listen to no pleadings, or tears, or commands. Remember that you will serve your mistress best by serving us."

That afternoon hundreds of bottles of choice Catawba wine were transported to Mr. Barry's warehouse; and some one—by accident, of course—leaving the bung of the cask loose, what remained of "Chadwick's best" deluged the cellar floor.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM THE MANSION TO THE STREET.

* She raised her from the cauld, cauld ground.
O dule and wae is me!
That I have my dear ladie found
Sae sad a sight to see."

—*Old Ballad.*

A few days after the events narrated in the last chapter, as I stood at the window of Mrs. Barry's room, Sam called to me from over the garden hedge:—

"Lizzie, come down here; I want you to help me a few minutes."

I shook my head.

"Yes, you must come. I am going to turf mother's verberna bed, and I want you to hold the measuring-line. Come; it won't take five minutes."

"Some other time, Sam."

"Some other time!" he repeated, "Yes, it's always some other time, now, when I ask you to do anything. You used to come and help me when I needed you." He turned away with a disappointed face.

"Lizzie," called Bridget, from the pantry, a few minutes later, when I entered the kitchen on a hurried errand, "will ye stir up the flummery puddin' for me, the masher likes wid his dinner? Sure I must git me pies in while the oven is in bakin' hate."

"I am sorry, Bridget, but I cannot spare the time. Mrs. Barry needs me this morning."

Bridget muttered something about its being the will, and not the time, I wanted.

It was hard to refuse these trilling requests to those under the same roof who were continually showing me kindness, and whose good-will I desired to retain. It was hard to be misunderstood, and thought selfish and disobliging; but my promise to Mr. Barry necessitated my remaining constantly with my mistress; and as I could not explain this to them, and heretofore could find plenty of time to help Bridget in the kitchen, Katy in the dining-room, and Sam in the garden, it was no wonder this sudden change excited their astonishment and displeasure.

But it was hardest of all to be looked upon with suspicion and dislike by one whom I tenderly loved. It could not be helped, for it had come to this: Mrs. Barry was a prisoner in her own house, and I was her jailer.

I cherished the hope that, under the stimulus of her husband's displeasure, and firm resolution to cure her, she would rouse herself, make common cause with us, and help to break the chain that bound her; but I soon found it must be a hand-to-hand fight, her cunning and artifice matched against our vigilance. And what a change the degrading habit made in the once noble, high-minded, Christian woman! She stooped to low tricks and cunning deceptions to elude and circumvent me, and made my task, not only exceed-

ingly difficult, but humiliating and painful. She suffered dreadfully. The hungry, savage creature within was awake, and tearing her. Her haggard face and parched, burning lips told of the raging fever. She would walk the floor for hours, moaning, crying, and begging for drink; then, utterly exhausted, lie down and sleep, only to cry out, in her dreams, for the poison she craved. I used to try to inspire her with the hope that this fierce appetite, ungratified, would after a while, wear itself out. But she felt no such hope. "It is too late," she said. "Why will you torment me? It will kill me, sooner or later; but you are killing me by a hundred deaths."

It was my trial; to bear these reproaches in a measure, alone. The fear she felt for her husband and restrained her in his presence, and deceived him in regard to her condition. Often, after a day of distress, she would appear so composed, during the hour of the evening he spent with her, that, in our private interview at the close of the day, for it came to be a settled thing for me to go to him every night to the library, and report progress,—he would think her doing well, when I knew to the contrary. It was not in Mr. Barry's nature to appreciate his wife's sufferings. How could he, with his perfectly healthy organization, his cool, phlegmatic temperament, his clear head, his iron will, understand a creature all sensibility and nerve, all excitement and passion, the very charm of her womanhood constituting her weakness and her liability to sin? He spoke with scorn of a mere bodily appetite gaining such power over a rational creature. If, by any possibility, he had fallen under the influence of such a habit, I doubt not he would have plucked it up by the roots as promptly and unflinchingly as I once saw him plunge his knife deep into his own quivering flesh, when he was bitten by a dog suspected of being mad. He pitied his wife; but there was contempt mingled with his pity, and a strong determination to crush the weakness out of her. She understood this, and hid from him all that she could.

It was one of the sad results of this habit that it separated Mrs. Barry from her family. As she yielded more and more to its influence, she lost all relish for social and domestic joys. To be left alone, and sit dozing in her chair, or sometimes to lie all day upon her bed, stupid from the effect of the liquor she drank, pleased her best. During the first happy year I spent under her roof, "mother's room" was the gathering-place for the family. Thither of an evening Mr. Barry brought his newspaper, Sam his whittling utensils; and even Philip, occasionally, laid aside his cigar, and gave up his usual visit to Turner's, that he might spend a little time with his invalid mother.

But, most of all, Sam availed himself of this privilege. Half the time out of school he spent in his mother's room. There was

perfect confidence between these two. She was acquainted with all his daring exploits and hair-breadth escapes, and condoled with him over his injuries; for Sam was always bruising his shins, or stubbing his toes, or falling from haymows and apple trees, and could generally exhibit bruises in all colors of the rainbow upon various parts of his person. He told her of all his scrapes at school, his quarrels with the boys, and his frequent seasons of disgrace with his teachers,—he was a great dunce at his books,—and this good mother listened with the deepest attention, pitying and soothing, or gently counselling and reprimanding, as the case required. I know in those days she often endured his loud voice and boisterous ways when she greatly needed quiet and repose; but she never complained. “No, let him stay,” she would say, when sometimes, in pity to her, I suggested sending him out of doors. “I know he is safe when he is with me.”

But those happy days passed away; and occasionally, when Sam came rushing up stairs, after school, I was sent to the door to tell him that “mother was lying down, and could not be disturbed,” or “mother’s head ached, and he must play out of doors.” It grieved me at these times to see his disappointed face; but it grieved me still more, when these excuses came to be habitual, and he met with frequent rebuffs, to notice how he came less and less frequently to his mother’s door, but wandered away by himself in the fields, or played with rude boys in the streets.

Once when he was admitted, and she sat with half-closed eyes, listless and inattentive, the boy stopped short in the middle of a story, and said, “Mother, I am not going to tell you the rest; for you don’t care a bit.” After this she excluded him more than ever. I think his presence was a reproach to her; that it awakened in her breast a dull consciousness of neglected duty; that she felt guilty at the sight of her child. But this was not all. There were times when the door *must* be closed against him; when his mother’s unconscious form, stretched upon the bed in drunken slumber, must be hidden from the eyes of her innocent child. Alas, that I have such things to write of this once noble, conscientious, Christian woman!

Sam came in from school one day with a black eye. He called to me from the foot of the stairs, and when I went down to him, he asked me to go to the kitchen and get him a piece of raw beefsteak. “You see, Lizzie, I would go myself, only Bridget is a little put out with me just now. The fact is,” said Sam, confidentially, and with a half-comical, half-ashamed expression on his face “I pinned the dish-cloth to the skirt of Pat Maloney’s coat last Sunday night, and I suppose it’s as well for me to keep out of the kitchen till she cools off a little.”

“If you are so hungry, Sam, we will have

some meat cooked for you,” I said, laughing.

“What a stupid girl you are! Of course I want it to put on my eye, to take down the swelling. Why, don’t you know Heenan and Tom Sayers cover their faces all over with it after a fight, and come out the next day as good as new? You see, I don’t want father to notice my black eye when he comes to tea.”

Informed of the remedy used by these celebrated gentlemen of the ring, I hastened to procure it for the young pugilist, who while he comforted his wounded member, narrated to me the story of his late encounter.

“You see, I didn’t mean to get in any more fights at school, for I know it’s wrong, and I promised father that I wouldn’t; but this afternoon, when we were out at recess, that great Bill Loomis, who is afraid to fight a boy of his own age, was bullying a little fellow not half his size. Well, I didn’t say anything for a while,—for it was none of my business,—till he began to twit the boy about his mother: she’s poor, and goes out washing. I thought that was too mean, and says I, ‘You quit that, Bill Loomis; let his mother alone.’ Upon that he turned upon me, and says he, in a mighty insulting way, ‘O, it’s a sore subject—is it? How does *your* mother like her medicine?’ The boys were all standing round, and heard it, and some of them laughed. I couldn’t stand that, and I pitched in. Lizzie, I gave him an awful drubbing. I guess he won’t forget it for one while; and now,” said Sam, looking up with a face nearly as red as the plaster with which it was partly covered, “I want to know what he meant by it.”

“He meant to insult you,” I said; “but I am sorry you touched him. I wouldn’t have soiled the toe of my boot on him, if I had been in your place.”

The boy knew I evaded his question, and looked suspiciously at me out of his one eye.

“He insulted my mother,” he said, but, to my great relief, did not pursue the subject; nor did he ever introduce it again.

A few days after, I met him on the stairs with a package in his hand.

“What have you there?” I asked.

“Medicine for mother,” he said; “will you take it to her? Jim Pease is waiting for me. Tell her I got it at Chadwick’s, and had it charged.”

I opened the bottle as soon as Sam was out of sight; it was brandy; and I threw bottle and all out of the window.

That afternoon, as I was helping my mistress dress for her ride,—she rode every day, and I, by Mr. Barry’s direction, went with her,—she told me to fill a basket with sweetmeats and jellies. “That poor Mrs. Isham is ill again,” Huldah says, “and we will carry her some thing, Lizzie.”

When we reached the house, in an obscure part of the town, she said, quite naturally, “I will sit in the carriage while you go in, Lizzie;

"don't hurry yourself." I did hurry myself, however, and was back in five minutes. I found her sitting as I left her; but she was flustered and out of breath, and Pat, the driver, was staring with all his eyes.

When we reached home, I took occasion to stop Pat as he drove his horses to the stable.

"Did Mrs. Barry leave the carriage while I was away, Pat?"

"Be jabbers," said Pat, "she niver waited for me to lit the steps down, but was out in a jiffy, an' whipped round the corner to Paddy O'Flannigan's shanty, an' back' fore ye could count tin; it's a light fut the mistress has."

I waited to hear no more. Paddy O'Flannigan kept an Irish groggery, one of the lowest in town.

I flew up stairs, and found my mistress with the bottle at her lips. I snatched it from her, and, with all the strength I possessed, hurled it through the window to the gravel walk below.

In her frantic rage she turned and struck me. "How dare you?" she said, with flashing eyes; "I have borne this long enough. You are a spy,—a mean, contemptible spy; you know you are. You have watched me and dogged me, and never left me a moment to myself for the last week. You have treated me like a child, and worse than a child. Go, I tell you; I discharge you on the spot."

She spoke with so much decision, that for a moment I was staggered.

"When Mr. Barry comes home," I said, "if you still wish it, I will go."

"And does my authority go for nothing? Has it come to this, that my husband sets my servants over me to watch and to spy, and I cannot even send them away without his authority? Everybody is against me. I am the most wretched creature in the world, and the only comfort left me they have taken away."

She forgot her anger, and began to cry. Presently she commenced pleading.

"Lizzie," she said, "I will forgive you everything if you will give me one glass. You used to give it to me every day. You were my good, kind Lizzie then. You never can refuse me this one little favor. I helped you all I could when you were in trouble. Dear Lizzie, good Lizzie, see, I kneel and beg you; your mistress begs you on her knees for this one little thing. Would you like to see your mother kneel and be refused?"

I was greatly touched. I knelt beside her, and tried to raise her. I mingled my tears with hers; but I was firm. I reminded her of the solemn pledge I gave her husband.

"He never will know it, dear," she said, eagerly, "or if he ever finds it out, I will take all the blame. Lizzie, do this for me, and when you are married I will give you the handsomest wedding dress to be found in Hartford. Only think! your wedding dress for one little glass of whiskey."

My wedding dress! If anything could have added to my distress at that moment, it was this allusion. When at length she found arguments and tears alike unavailing, she relapsed into sullen silence; only once I heard her mutter, "I will have it yet."

Mr. Barry did not come home to tea that night, and I think it was about nine o'clock when my mistress asked me to help her undress. She was quiet and submissive; but I remembered afterwards that there was a strange, unsettled look in her eyes. I moved about for a few moments, putting things to rights, then set a shaded light where it would not disturb her eyes, and left her to her repose. I sat with my sewing in my own little room, close at hand. It was a wild night, the wind high, and the rain beating against the windows.

I heard Bridget and Katie come in and go to their room. Sam was in bed long ago, but Mr. Barry and Phil were not yet at home. Ten o'clock struck from Mrs. Barry's French clock on the mantle-piece. I felt very weary after the excitement of the day, worn out in mind and body, and thought I would look in and see if my mistress was quietly sleeping, and then seek my pillow. I stole in on tip-toe—looked, looked again. I ran to the table and snatched the shade from the lamp. She was gone!

I did not think of searching for her in the house; I knew too well she was not there. I ran to the closet in the hall, where my hat and shawl always hung; they were missing. In my fright and eagerness to be gone, I was scarcely surprised; but snatching a shawl of Mrs. Barry's from the back of her chair, I threw it over my head, and ran down stairs. As I was unlocking the side door, I heard a muffled knock, and, throwing it wide open, Huldah stood before me. She was dripping wet. Her wide cap-border clung flat and starchless upon her forehead. Great drops hung from the rim of her black bonnet, and dripped from her elbows, and from the burden she carried in her arms. What was that burden? I remember noticing, first, my own missing bonnet, the strings loosened, and great masses of dark hair, dank and heavy, falling nearly to the ground. Then I saw, hanging limp and lifeless, a little white hand; and as I looked, something caught the gleam of the lamp I carried, and flashed back diamond sparks. It was Mrs. Barry's wedding ring!

Without a word, in solemn procession, we carried her up stairs, and laid her, all wet and soiled as she was with the filth of the street, upon her luxurious bed. Still neither of us spoke a word. I tried, with trembling hands, to remove her wet garments; but Huldah did not offer to help me. Presently her chest began to heave; there was a choking in her throat; and she broke into loud sobbing.

"She was a-layin' in the street," said Hul-

dah; "Clary Hopkins was a-layin' in the street. That head by rights as high as any lady's in the land, was down in the mud an' the dirt."

It is dreadful to hear a man cry. One knows the sorrow must be very deep to call up sobs from a strong man's breast; and Huldah was so like a man in her physical frame, in her resolute character, in her seeming freedom from all woman's weaknesses, that to hear her choking and sobbing with irrepressible emotion was something strange and awe-inspiring.

"I knew her when she was a gal," said Huldah. "They thought the ground warn't good enough for her to tread on, nor the sun warn't bright enough to shine on her. They wrapped her up in satin an' velvet, an' they wouldn't let a breath o' wind come nigh her; an' to-night she was out all alone in the cold an' the dark, wadin' ankle-deep in the black mud, with the wind a-blowin' in her face, an' the rain a-beatin' down on her bare head, an' that brown hair o' hers the square used to slick down with his hand more'n a dozen times a day, was a-dabblin' in the gutter. O, ho!" The howl with which she closed is indescribable.

"An' her old father, he kep' on a-pilin' up money an' buyin' land, an' they sez to him, 'What do you want any more for, square?' an, sez he, 'I've got the handsomest gal in the county, an' I'll make her the richest.' An' the French governess she come, an' the dancin' master he come, an' the grand piany it come, an' they spent a power o' money, an' what she didn't larn ain't wuth larnin'; an' to-night she lays there, an don't know no more'n a beast."

"O Huldah! hush, and come and help me."

"An' when he brought her here a bride, the feather on her bunnet warn't a bit whiter'n her forehead, nor the posies inside pinker'n her cheeks, an' this ere room was fixed up for her an' trimmed with June roses an' she was a June rose herself, an' the purtiest on 'em all; an' she stepped out o' her grand carriage, an' come walkin' in like a queen to her bower; an' to-night I fetched her in here out o' the street. O, ho!"

"She will die, Huldah, if you don't help me take off her wet clothes."

She did not heed me.

"O, my lamb!" she cried, dropping on her knees by the bedside; "my poor little lost lamb! I'd gin a hundred lives like mine to save ye; but the cruel wolf has got yer in his jaws. O, my lamb! my poor little lost lamb!"

She spoke these words with infinite tenderness, great tears running down her cheeks and dropping upon the hand she caressed between her rough palms. Then she rose to her feet, threw off her wet outer garment, and began, with strong hands, to help me. What gentleness and skill love gave her! A

mother undressing a sick child could scarcely be more delicate in her touch than was that coarse woman to-night. As I threw Mrs. Barry's dress over a chair, something fell from the pocket. I stooped to pick it up, and recognized it instantly. It was my own little green morocco porte-monnaie, a Christmas gift from Frank.

Our task was completed, and I was gathering up the wet garments, when I heard Mr. Barry's night-key in the door. Huldah heard it, too, and immediately left the room. She was no favorite with Mr. Barry, who only endured her for his wife's sake; and understanding this perfectly, she kept out of his way as much as possible. I answered his look of surprise—for he noticed at once the disordered appearance of the room—by telling him all I knew of the events of the evening. His face was a sight to behold.

"She shall never taste another drop of liquor, if I put her in a strait-jacket to keep her from it."

This was all he said.

I went down stairs; for after letting Huldah in, I had forgotten to lock the side door. On my return, as I entered the hall at the farther end, Philip Barry opened the front door. I stood in the shadow, and waited till he took the hand-lamp, always left burning on the hall table for him, and went his way. All up the stairs I noticed how the lamp swayed and flickered in his hand; and once when it shone full upon his breast, I saw on his shirt bosom, and on his light-colored vest, spots of a dull red color. "How careless in him," I thought, "to spill his wine!" and then it went from my mind.

I passed the door of my mistress's room on tiptoe, and, looking in, saw Mr. Barry sitting just where I left him. The proud man's head was bowed, and his face covered with both his hands.

CHAPTER XIII.

MANIA A POTU.

"O, I have passed a miserable night,
So full of fearful dreams, of ugly sights,
That, as I am a Christian faithful man,
I would not spend another such a night.
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days."

—Shakespeare.

All that night there were strange noises in the house. They mingled with my dreams, and roused me more than once from a sound sleep, until at length I could sleep no more. I heard a confused sound, like a person talking in a distant room, not loud, but fast and angrily, then sinking to a low muttering, or ending in a sharp cry, as from one in pain. Several times something fell heavily to the floor; and once, starting up suddenly, I heard a stealthy step in the hall, the rustling of

garments close to my door; then the footsteps seemed to retreat slowly, a door opened and shut, and all was still.

These sounds did not proceed from Mrs. Barry's room. My sleeping apartment joined hers by a small dressing-room, scarcely larger than a closet, both rooms also opening into the hall. I could distinguish the slightest sound in her room—even her voice, if she spoke in her usual tone; but all was quiet there. How could they sleep? How dared they sleep? Could it be possible that these mysterious manifestations were for my ears only, and that they presaged some further disaster hanging over this ill-fated house? I thought the night would never end. Horrible fancies crowded upon me. My mind was full of superstitious terror and awe. At length, when the daylight crept into the room, I sank to sleep, and did not waken till the sun shone full upon my windows. How foolish the night's fears seemed in the brightness of the morning! I doubted if I had not been dreaming, and resolved to say nothing of my alarm, if no one but myself in the house was disturbed.

When I came from my room, Mr. Barry was in the hall. He handed me the key of his wife's door without speaking. At all times he was a man of few words, and latterly had grown more reticent than ever. I understood the action and the trust it implied, as though he had spoken. I found my mistress sleeping, and presently, when the bell rang for breakfast, I went down stairs to pour the coffee—a duty devolving upon me when she was unable to rise.

Sam finished his breakfast in a hurry, and ran out of doors; but returned in a few moments.

"Father," he said, "do come and see what ails Phil. He acts as if he was crazy. He says he is pulling cotton out of his mouth, and he's made it all bloody digging with his nails."

While he was speaking, his brother entered the room. His whole appearance was disordered and troubled; his face flushed, his eye wild and bloodshot, and there was blood upon his lips. With trembling hands he was working at his mouth, as though pulling something from it, measuring it off, and winding it up into a coil.

"Philip, what is the matter?" said his father.

"Matter enough," said the young man, sulkily; "my mouth is full of wire, and I am trying to get it out. Come, how many more yards? That's about enough, I should think. O, come out here, now. I'll fetch it."

"That's the way he's been running, father, for the last hour. A while ago it was cotton, and now it's wire. Why, Phil, what are you talking about? There's no wire there."

"I tell you there is," he replied, angrily; "here, take this, will you?" and he appeared to break off a piece, and hand it to his brother.

Sam burst into a loud laugh, and Mr. Barry looked from one to the other in astonishment.

"Be quiet, Sam," he said; "and, Phil, stop this fooling, and eat your breakfast." Then, noticing the boy's haggard face and shaking hands, he added, sternly, "Have you been drinking already this morning, sir?"

Philip uttered an oath. It was the first time I ever heard him swear in his father's presence.

"I haven't drank a glass of liquor in a week," he said; "the sight of it makes me sick. I can't eat nor sleep, and I feel like a fool."

"Is it a new sensation?" said his brother, dryly.

Instead of the angry rejoinder I expected, his face suddenly assumed an expression of terror and disgust.

"O, take it off," he screamed; "take it off! The nasty, slimy, crawling thing! Mash it! Kill it! There's another! Get off my foot you little green cuss, you! O father, what shall I do?"

There was no mistaking this for fooling. Drops of real anguish stood on his forehead.

"Sam," said Mr. Barry, "run to Dr. Sharpe's office, and ask him to step round as soon as possible; and, Philip, come to the library with me."

I went to the kitchen to prepare Mrs. Barry's breakfast; but in a few minutes Sam came in search of me.

"They want you in there," he said, "to get cups and things for the doctor. Lizzie, what is the matter with Phil? He has been carrying on all night, talking and swearing, and throwing bootjacks all over the room."

These, then, were the sounds I heard. Dr. Sharpe sat at the library table, his case of medicines open before him; Mr. Barry in his arm-chair, opposite; and Philip, quiet enough at that moment, between them. I stood by the doctor's chair, waiting his orders; and I noticed that, though apparently busy mixing with his pocket-knife the powders of different colors, he kept a close watch upon his patient.

"Young man," he said at length, looking up from his occupation, "what have you been drinking lately?"

"There it is again," said Philip Barry, angrily; "everybody says, 'What have you been drinking?' I have told you, over and over again, I haven't drank a glass of liquor for a week. How am I going to drink, I should like to know, when the sight of it makes me gag?"

"Yes, yes," said the doctor, soothingly, "I understand all that. The gastric derangement, under which you are suffering, has brought about a morbid sensitiveness of the mucous membrane of the stomach. A glass half full of water, young woman, and a couple of teaspoons. But before this was induced, what was your accustomed stimulant?"

"I don't know what you mean with your big words," said the patient.

"I mean, what did you drink,—ale, wine, whiskey, or brandy?"

"O, well, doctor, when these bad feelings first came on, and I found I couldn't keep wine or whiskey on my stomach, I began to take brandy smashers, pretty stiff, too; for the stronger they were, the more likely they were to stay down. For a while they did pretty well; and then they served me just like the rest. Lookout, doctor! there's a black spider as big as the palm of your hand, right over you, ready to drop. Ha, ha! there he goes plump on your head."

The doctor instinctively clapped his hand to his bald crown.

"Have you any brandy in the house?" he said.

"Not a drop," said Mr. Barry.

"Well, send round to Chadwick's, and get a quart of his best, and give it to this young man, a spoonful at a time, as often as the stomach will retain it. The powders and draught are to be administered alternately, once an hour. My young friend, we want you to keep as quiet as possible. How did you rest last night?"

"Doctor, I never shut my eyes. I was dead sleepy, too; but I'll tell you why." He lowered his voice to a confidential tone. "There were rats in my room, not common rats either, but great fellows as big as your head, with eyes as green as cats'. They scrambled all over my bed; they—Halloa! there's one now! quick, doctor! there he goes, right up your leg! I'll fetch him!"

He snatched his father's cane, and aimed a blow at the doctor's knee, which that learned man avoided by springing back with a display of agility which was anything but dignified; then, in a wild chase round the room, the unhappy boy pursued the imagined object of his dislike, striking at chairs and tables, and exhausting himself by a hundred vain efforts. Calmed at last, he stood pale, trembling, panting, the perspiration rolling from his face.

When the doctor rose to go, with a promise to call again in a few hours, Mr. Barry asked me if I remembered how the medicine was to be given.

"It will be necessary," said Dr. Sharpe, before I could reply, "for our young friend to be immediately provided with a nurse, possessing more physical strength than this young woman. Let me suggest to you, Mr. Barry, to obtain two able-bodied men to remain with him at present."

"In heaven's name, doctor," said Mr. Barry, as they left the room together, "what ails the boy?"

Dr. Sharpe lowered his voice, and with his blandest smile said something I could not hear.

"You don't mean it," said Mr. Barry, turning very pale.

"My dear sir, I assure you there is no cause for alarm. I find your son," said Dr. Sharpe, assuming his professional tone, "in the second stage of a disease, which, in this age of medical science, and a greatly improved method of practice, is now treated most successfully. Indeed, I may say, it seldom proves fatal, unless complicated by some other affection which endangers life, apart from the influence of the malady. In the present case, our young friend's youth and good constitution are greatly in his favor."

To this Mr. Barry made no reply.

"Come, come," said Dr. Sharpe, "you must not be unduly anxious. I see nothing alarming in the case at present. We have the usual symptoms—watchfulness, nervous tremor, with delirious illusions, a marked irritability of the muscular system, acceleration and smallness of the pulse, &c.; all which invariably accompany the disease, none of them at present in that degree to occasion any apprehension as to the result. You notice, in my treatment, I place great dependence upon a timely and judicious exhibition of stimulants. Now, that strikes you as curious—doesn't it? You remember the old proverb, 'A hair of the dog that bit you,' hey? Let me explain the philosophy to you. *Mania a potu* is produced by habitual stimulation; but mark this: the disease does not appear till the stimulus is suspended. For instance: your son is interrupted by a morbid condition of the coating of the stomach, in his daily use of stimulants. What is the consequence? His system immediately feels the want of its customary narcotic. It has been gradually changed, until the depressing agent has become necessary to an approach towards health. Without it, he finds himself unable to sleep, and his cerebral and nervous system are thrown into a state of uncontrollable excitement. There comes to be an excess of activity and a superabundance of vitality in the brain and nerves, requiring the habitual narcotic to keep it down. Bear this in mind, my dear sir, that the disease arises from a heightened activity in the sensorium, and you will readily see that—"

I know not how long Dr. Sharpe would have discoursed learnedly upon the subject, for he was under full headway, rubbing his head quite savagely with one hand, while with the other he held Mr. Barry by the button of his coat; but he was interrupted by a hurried ring of the door-bell. As soon as I opened the door, two gentlemen entered the hall. One of them I knew perfectly. He was a respected citizen and a justice of the peace; the other was a stranger.

Mr. Barry stepped forward to meet them, and the doctor returned to the library to look once more at his patient.

Mr. Thompson spoke in low, earnest tones, and a part only of what he said reached my ears. He seemed to be apologizing for some-

thing he was about to do. I heard these words—"painful duty"—"regret"—"sincere sympathy"—with similar expressions; then, "a most unhappy affair"—"your eldest son"—"Turner's saloon"—"both under the influence of liquor"—"the young man desperately wounded"—"now in a dying condition;" then, still lower, something about satisfying the claims of justice—and the word "arrest."

I saw Mr. Barry put both hands to his head, and heard him groan aloud; then he took them into the parlor, and I heard nothing further; but a few moments after, as I carried my mistress's breakfast up stairs, they were leaving the house, and Dr. Sharpe accompanied them to the door.

"I can give my affidavit, gentlemen," he said, "that the young man is in no condition to go with you at present."

Mr. Barry did not leave the house that day. By his request, Dr. Sharpe secured the attendance of two strong men, who were well acquainted with the disease, to take care of this unhappy boy; and before night it required their united strength, and the exercise of all their wits, to confine him to the room, and to prevent him injuring himself and others.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNTIL DEATH DO US PART.

"Then come the wild weather, come sleet or come snow;
We will stand by each other however it blow;
Oppression and sickness and sorrow and pain,
Shall be to our true love as links to the chain."
—*Longfellow.*

I sat with my mistress all day. Neither of us spoke of her last night's experience; but she was very sad, often in tears, and never once looked me in the face. I locked her door on the outside every time I left the room; but, for very shame, I turned the key softly, and hoped she did not hear.

Going down, just at evening, I met Huldah on the stairs.

"Cheer up, gal," she said; "he ain't dead yet."

"What do you mean?" I inquired, in surprise. "Who isn't dead?"

"Who isn't dead? Well, that's a curious question. Ain't he yer sweetheart, arter all?"

I thought she meant Philip Barry, and I gave an indignant denial.

"What consarned lies folks do tell!" said Huldah. "They told down stairs how you'd been a-keepin' company these five years; was as good as married; said 'twas all along o' you they fit. Phil Barry said something sassy bout yer 'fore all the company, in Turner's bar-room, and young Stanley he up and knocked him down; and then that limb of Satan out with his pistol, and shot him through the

lungs. Dew tell, now, if he aint your sweetheart, arter all? Well, I thought yer seemed mighty onconsarned."

The blow tell so suddenly that, for a moment, I felt bewildered. From what I heard of Mr. Thompson's talk in the morning, I knew that in a drunken quarrel with Philip Barry, the previous evening, some one was dangerously wounded, and so certainly expected to die that officers of justice were sent to apprehend the murderer. I knew nothing further until this dreadful disclosure. Mr. Barry I dared not question, and I was in no mood to gossip with the girls in the kitchen, even if I supposed they knew of the affair. Besides, I felt little curiosity to know the name of the victim. Philip Barry's associates were among the worst young men in town, and I supposed he had killed some worthless fellow as wild and wicked as himself. My sympathies were all enlisted in behalf of the doubly-afflicted man under whose roof I dwelt. In those days Mr. Barry did not inspire me with affection and confidence. While the love I felt for my mistress made it a delight to do for her, I served him through fear. But now I pitied him with all my heart—the proud man, crushed to the earth as he was, and bearing everything silently, sternly, and alone.

Many times that day, as every day, I had thought of Frank, lovingly, but very sadly. It seemed strange to be living apart from him, shut out from his fellowship in the present and the future, our interests separate, our lives divided. The whole world was changed to me since Sunday night. This and much more I thought, sitting in my mistress's darkened room. But now to know that he lay suffering, bleeding, dying—and for me! O, it was too much! I understood everything in an instant. I remembered his reckless manner when, after pleading in vain with me, he gave me back my promise; his passionate words, "God knows I loved you well enough to be anything you wished; but you have made a desperate man of me to-night;" and I saw how, loving me with that strong passion to nature, the pain of parting was too great for him to bear, and he plunged into excesses to forget it. And so, when Phil Barry, in his low, insulting way, spoke slightly of me, Frank was roused to frenzy, and gave taunt for taunt, and courted the quarrel that ended in the fatal shot. In much less time than I can write them, these thoughts flashed through my mind, and I confessed, in an agony of remorse, that I was the cause of his death.

"Where is he, Huldah?" I said, and my own voice sounded strange to me.

"Why, what a numb critter you be!" said Huldah. "This ain't the fust you've hearn on't—is it? 'Whar is he?' to be sure! They took him to the highest house; an' don't the widder Barto keep a factory boardin'-house next to Turner's saloon? So yer ma's, at the nussin' of him; for they say, since the old man

died, the boy ain't got kith nor kin in these parts, only old Aunt Polly Gibbs; and she lives down river somewhere, and she's bed-ridden with rheumatiz. Well, I don't reckon he'll suffer for want o' care. They say the widder was a hangin' over him all night jes like an own mother, when them pesky doctors was stickin' sharp things into him to try and pull out the ball. They'd better a let the poor boy die in peace, 'cordin' to my notion."

I could not bear another word. I hurried to the library, and, giving Mr. Barry the key to his wife's room, told him I must go home for an hour. Philip Barry was raving like a maniac. I heard his shrieks and yells outside the gate.

When I reached home, mother was busy over the kitchen stove preparing beef-tea. She looked tired and sad, but her face lighted instantly when she saw me.

"I am glad you have come, Lizzie," she said. "I have looked for you all day."

"Mother, I only knew it half an hour ago. Will he die?"

"I am afraid he will, my child."

"Then I have killed him. O mother, what shall I do?"

She took me in her arms, and let me cry a little while, and then I told her the story as briefly as I could. It touched her deeply, bringing to remembrance her own sad experience. I think at first she hardly knew how to reply. But she comforted me as well as she could. It matters little what she said. I could not repeat it, if I tried; for I was too excited and agitated to heed her, but was continually interrupting her begging to go to him and ask his forgiveness before he died. At length she spoke sternly to me.

"No, Lizzie," she said, "you cannot see Frank to-night. The doctor left orders for him to be kept perfectly quiet; and to see you in your present state would certainly kill him. You can go back as you came, unless you can control yourself."

I knew, my mother meant what she said, and the fear that he would indeed die, and leave me unforgiven, quieted me effectually. I laid aside my bonnet and shawl, bathed my eyes and smoothed my hair, and, to prove to her that I was quite myself again, lifted the beef-tea from the fire, and strained it with a steady hand.

"Come, now you are my brave girl again," mother said, and led the way to the sickroom.

He was sleeping, lying easily, with one arm under his head, as I had seen him many a time years ago, when, wearied out with boyish sports, he slumbered on the green grass under the apple trees in his father's orchard. His black curls clustered round his white forehead. O, how dreadfully white it looked in the lamp-light, and his cheeks and lips as well! I took the low seat by his bedside, and hardly dared to breathe, lest I should wake him. How still he was! What if he

were already dead! In sudden terror I bent over him, and he opened his eyes. He was not in the least surprised to find me there.

"I thought you would come, Lizzie," he said, with a smile. "I want to talk to you. Please give me a drink of water. Will you let me hold your hand? Thank you. Now I can talk." He was so calm and self-possessed that I felt ashamed of my agitation.

"Lizzie," he continued, "I am sorry for those mean things I said Sunday night. No, don't interrupt me. I am going to talk it all out. I was dreadfully angry with you. I thought you were cruel and unjust to me then; but I have had a hard lesson, and I have learned something by it. You knew me better than I knew myself, dear. No wonder you felt afraid to trust me. No, don't speak. You see, I felt so strong and self-confident that it provoked me to have you think me in danger. You know I don't care for liquor, as many young men do. I never drank it because I loved it, but because all the other fellows drank, and it seemed mean and unsocial to refuse. I always despised a man who drank himself drunk. But last night I was in at Turner's, and they twitted me with looking glum, and I drank to get my spirits up, and then I kept on drinking; and at last, when Phil Barry said something insulting about you, I knocked him down, and in an instant my blood was all on fire. The dislike I always felt for him changed into such bitter, burning hate that I wanted his life's blood. O Lizzie, it makes shudder to think of it. It was through no want of inclination that I did not kill him. There was murder in my heart, and if I could have got that pistol from him I would have had his heart's blood. And it was the drink that maddened me. The thought of committing such a horrid deed now turns me sick. I tell you, Lizzie, there is nothing too bad for a man to do when he has been drinking."

"Hush, Frank; you will make yourself worse."

"No, it will do me good." He stopped a moment to rest. "Lizzie, I suppose you know the doctors say I cannot live. You don't know how they hurt me last night; but, though the pain was dreadful to bear, it was nothing in comparison to my distress of mind. When you used to urge me to become a Christian, I acknowledged the truth of all you said to me; and when I thought about it afterwards, I would say to myself, 'Yes, I mean to be a Christian some day; but there is plenty of time. I am too young to sober down, and become a church member quite yet. I want to devote all my strength and energy now to getting ahead in the world. When I have enjoyed myself a little more, and made money, I will get religion, and be a good Christian man.' And so, whenever an appeal was made to me or I heard a sermon that set my conscience to work, I would stave the matter off in

this way ; but I knew all the while that I was doing wrong. And last night, O, how I felt when I found I must die ! Well, your mother stood over me all night,—dear, kind woman ; if she had been my own mother she could not have done more for me,—and I was groaning dreadfully ; but it was more from pain of mind than body. And she found it out some way, for she began to tell me about Jesus ; how his blood cleanseth from all sin, and how he forgave the dying thief on the cross ; and that he would not cast me off, though I came to him such a dreadful sinner, and at the eleventh hour. And while she was talking, I just resolved to give myself right up to him, sins and all. I had no time to wait and grow better, and so I took my poor soul and put it into his hands, and prayed to him to take me just as I was. And, Lizzie, my dreadful distress seemed all of a sudden to pass away, and there came such a peaceful feeling instead ! It made me think of the times when I was a little fellow and used to grieve my mother, and, the minute after, I knew I was wrong, but was too proud to own it ; and so I would go about all day, perfectly miserable, with a load at my heart, till at last I could bear it no longer, but would go to her and tell her I was sorry, and, before the words were out of my mouth, my heart was as light as a feather, and I could play and study again. Well, I felt that last night, and to-day my trouble has not come back, though I am almost afraid to hope that God has forgiven me. And I can't think about good things as I want to. My mind is confused, and my head is weak, and this pain drives all thought away. O Lizzie, a sick-bed is a poor place for repentance. I want to warn every one not to put off religion to a dying hour. It makes me shudder to think of the example I have set ; the trifling, useless life I have led. What have I done to glorify God ? Do you think he has forgiven me ? It seems so mean in me to have spent my whole life in selfishly pleasing myself, and then put off my Maker with t-e-fag-end. What can I do for God on this sick-bed ? O, if he would but spare my life a little longer, that I might do a little good in the world, and try to atone, in some measure, for all these wasted years !"

He paused utterly exhausted. I tried to speak ; but the words would not come, and I could only silently press his hand. He looked earnestly in my face for a moment, and then continued.

"But this is not all I wanted to say to you. No, it will not hurt me to talk. No matter if it does, if I cannot live, you know. I have been thinking that when I am gone—O Lizzie, don't cry so—you will be thinking about what I said, and blame yourself for giving me up. Now, promise me, dear, not to do it. You have nothing to reproach yourself with. I can see now why you dared not trust yourself to me. Doesn't the Bible say, 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbe-

lievers ?' I see now what a poor husband I should have made you. Lizzie, I realize it all. I don't know that anything short of what happened last night would have made me realize, for I was so proud and self-confident ; but God has taught me, by a fearful lesson, that my own strength is weakness. Now, listen to me, dear. You did just right. You must never shed one self-reproachful tear when I am gone. I love you so much I want you to be happy. I cannot die in peace thinking that I leave a shadow on your path."

For the first time, his voice faltered, and the tears came to his eyes.

I forgot all about my mother's caution. I forgot all my doubts and fears. I forgot everything but my love for him, and my fear of losing him. I called him by every endearing name I knew. I begged him, in the most passionate language, not to die and leave me ; and I never raised my head from his bosom, or loosened my clasp about his neck, till he smoothed my hair in the old fond way, and called me "wife." Then I saw a red spot on either cheek, and, frightened at the mischief I had wrought, would have called my mother, but he held me fast.

"One moment," he said, and took both my hands in his.

"Mine, Lizzie—really and truly mine ?" I answered him in the solemn words of Scripture :—

"God do so to me, and more also, if I aught but death part thee and me."

And this was our second betrothal.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HORRORS.

"Possessed of devils."

"If aught but death part thee and me." All the way home my heart repeated the solemn pledge, making it a triumphant song. This was joy enough for the present, and I would not think of the terrible possibilities of the future. If the angel of death hovered over the house that night, his wings cast no shadow upon my path. Life was brim full of sweetness and joy to me. How gently the fragrant wind caressed my cheek, and lifted the hair from my forehead ! What a soft light the new moon shed upon my path across the meadows !—the path we so often had walked together, with green grass and clover blossoms on either side. And when I passed under the old apple tree, way up in the branches I heard a robin crooning sleepily to his mate. I blessed them all, moon, and bird, and tree. They seemed to sympathize in my joy. Not even when I came in sight of the stately mansion, within whose walls so much sorrow and disgrace were hidden, did my happy mood pass away.

I slept soundly all night. I think I was the only person in the house who was not disturbed by the antics proceeding from the room where Philip Barry was confined. Perhaps I should except my mistress, for I found her, on my return, quiet and comfortable in her bed; and in the morning she had scarcely changed her position, and was disinclined to rise. This was surprising, because, without the stimulant she craved, she was usually nervous, irritable, and sleepless. Had I left the key of her room in other hands than her husband's I might have suspected her of once more eluding our vigilance; but this was out of the question, and I dismissed the thought.

Passing the sick man's door the next morning, — he was removed to a room up stairs, — I stumbled over Huldah in the dark hall. She was on her knees, listening at the key-hole. So far from feeling disturbed at being discovered in this equivocal position, she urged me, in a loud whisper, to join her; and when I refused, she followed me to my room to talk.

"He won't die this time," she said; "he's bad enough, but he ain't dangerous."

"How can you tell, Huldah?"

"Cause I'm acquainted with the disease, child, an' I've been a-watchin' his symptoms. You see the heft of his ravin's is all about little things, bugs, an' snakes, an' stingin' critturs, a pesterin' him the hull time; but if he was dangerous, there'd be great heavy things a-crushin' of him down, rocks, an' stuns, an' sarpints as big round as the trunk of a tree, an' great devils with pitchforks, an' sich like. When they see them things, an' can't get no sleep, you kin most generally reckon on their dyin'. To be sure, they do come out of it sometimes; but most always it's the end of em."

"How came you to know so much about it, Huldah?"

"Good land, child! didn't my father have 'the horrors,' as we used to call it, — didn't know nothin' 'bout 'delirium tremens' in them days, — as much as a dozen times, an' die in a fit out at last? Dear suz! how scart I was the fust time! I didn't know nothin' what ailed him, he acted so dretful queer; an' I sent Mose Allen, unbeknown to father, lickity skit, arter old Dr. Fudge. You see, father kep' round about his work jest as if there wasn't nothin' the matter of him. He allus did. He wasn't a man to gin up to anything as he had strength for to fight it. But every now an' then he'd holler out and make a grab at somethin' in the air, or he'd be a clawin' in the horse-trough, or fishin' somethin' out o' the water-pail; an' when I axed him what he was arter, he'd roll up his eyes awful, an' yell out, 'Snakes!'

"Well, when Dr. Fudge got there, he watched him a spell, an' says he, 'Don't be scart, Huldah; he'll come out of it; an' he gin him a great dose of laudanum, an', sure enough, the

old man went to sleep, an' I should think he slept goin' on twelve hours; an' when he woke up he was sore all over where he'd mauled himself, an' jest as weak as a kitten, but all right in his head. He was tacted that way two or three times, an' got over it 'mazin' quick: father had a wonderful constitution. I don't remember as he ever enjoyed a spell of poor health in his life. But I used to notice, arter a while, the things that pestered him was bigger, an' stronger, an' different like; an' he used to git clear tuckered out a-whalin' away at 'em. Goo! land! I've seen the sweat pour off that man jest like rain, till there wasn't a dry rag on him, an' he screechin' out that he was chokin' an' dyin'; an' he'd gin the dretfulest groans you ever heerd."

"I should think one such experience would have cured him of drinking. When he recovered, did he remember all that happened, and know the cause of his sufferings?"

"There couldn't nobody have a more realizin' sense of it, than what he did, nor feel wuss over it, nuther. Father was wonderful pious. He was a hard-shell Baptist, an' a real pillar in the church. You'd orter heerd him talk in meetin'. He had a great gift, an' he warn't the man to keep his talent hid up in a napkin. Well, arter every spell o' hard drinkin' he'd up an' make a confession afore the church. Them confessions did a powerful sight o' good. He was the meekest crittur you ever did see. Seemed as though he couldn't run himself down enough. He used to mourn over his state o' backslidin', an' call himself the miserablest of sinners, an' a poor worm o' the dust, an' sich like."

"Well, one time when he'd been cryin' an' takin' on at a great rate, callin' himself everything that was bad, old Deacon Job Skinner got up. He was stun dretful, an' couldn't hear a word; an' sez he, in his little squeaky voice, 'I kin bear witness to every word the good brother has said.' I tell yer, father was riled up. He held in till arter meetin', an' then he shook his fist right in the old man's face, an' sez he, 'You fool! what did you mean by blackguardin' me in that way afore all the company?' I say for't, if Uncle Job didn't look skeert! an' yer see he was as innocent as a baby, for he hadn't he-rd one word, but cal'lated 'twas all right, 'cause father said it. They all looked up to father."

"But he made one confession I never shall forget to my dyin' day. It was arter he got a-goin' pretty bad, and folks was beginnin' to talk. Well, there come along a Baptist preacher, to stop over night with us. He was a yaller-complected, lantern-jawed, oncomfortable lookin' crittur, an' had a way, when he was talkin', of rollin' up his eyes, so you couldn't see nothin' but the whites, an' puttin' out his tongue every now and then to wet his lips, that was dretful disagreeable. I tuk a dislike to him the minut I sot eyes on him. Well, arter supper, he began to lectur' father

right afore Mose Allen an' I—Mose was mendin' an old harness, and I was peelin' taters for breakfast—about his drinkin' habits. He didn't appear to find fault in the right kind o' sperit; anyhow, it didn't suit father, for he up in the middle on't bilin' mad, and ordered him to clear out. An' when the crittur stood, kinder dumbfounded-like, father hyste him off his feet, an' over the doorstep, an' flung his saddle-bags arter him. The next day father was out in the tater field. He hadn't been quite right in his head for a day or two; an' that mornin' I see him take up the poker to stir the fire, an' drop it as though it was red hot; an' sez I, 'Father, what ails the poker?' an' sez he, 'It ain't a poker; it's a snake, for it squirmed in my hand.' But he went to work all the same; an' arter he'd hoed a spell—he told me this, you see, when he got well—there riz right up out o' the tater hill he was hoin' the head o' that are Baptist preacher. It gin father a dretful start. 'Git out o' my way,' sez he. The crittur never moved, but kep a-showin' the whites of its eyes, and runnin' out its tongue to wet its lips, jest as it did the night afore. 'Git out o' my way,' sez father agin, 'if yer don't want to be cut in two with this ere hoe;' but it never stirred. Father said he didn't want to kill the crittur, an' so he went t'other side o' the field to work on another patch, but the varmint was there quicker'n he was, a-starin' at him out o' the fust hill. Well, by that time, father got his dander up, an' sez he, 'Now, look here, old skewjaw; you stop that mighty quick, or I'll find out, with this ere hoe, whether you are a hard-shell or a soft; and with that he went to another hill, an' there that disgustin' old crittur was, mowin' at him, and flickin' its chops as bad as ever. An' father, he up with his hoe an' chopped that head into more'n forty pieces. Well, he had an awful spell on't that time; some days it tuk three men to hold him; but when he was all over it, an' jest as right in his head as you be, there warn't no power in heaven nor airth could convince him that he didn't kill that are Baptist preacher; an' as soon as ever he got about, he up an' made a confession afore a hull meetin'-house full o' folks.

"Sez father, sez he,—he was a master hand at quotin' scriptur,—'Brethring an' sistering, I do confess my sin this day; I have slain a man to my woundin', an' a young man to my hurt.' Here they all set up a dretful groanin', all but Deacon Job Skinner, an' he squealed out, 'Glory! Hallelujah!' He allus would shout 'Ballelujah,' hit or miss. Then father he up an' told the hull story, only he didn't let on 'bout the preacher's name.

"But he didn't git no peace o' mind arter that. 'I've laid hands on one o' the Lord's anointed,' sez he. 'Lawful sakes! father,' sez I, 'supposin' he was a minister.'—you see, it warn't no use tellin' him he didn't kill the man, 'cause he was so sot in his mind,—sup-

posin' he was a minister,' sez I; 'that don't make it no wuss. As fur as I kin see, ministers is jest like other folks, only a little more so.' But he wouldn't take no comfort. He got the idee that he'd committed the unpardonable sin, an' was given up to the Evil One to be tormented afore his time. In his next spell—'twas his last one—he fit devils the heft of the time. Every time that poor soul went inter the street a troop on em' follered him. He could hear em' close behind him, tramp, tramp; an' they'd curse an' blaspheme awful, till he'd put his fingers in his ears, an' run as tight as he could clip it. But he never could run fast enuff to git away. There they was again as soon as he slacked up a leetle; tramp, tramp, again, so close to him he could feel their hot breaths; but when he turned round he never could see anything. Then they'd jeer at him, an' say, 'We are all here. Yes, yes, we are all here, an' you won't never git quit of us.' An' he used to hear 'em plan, how, as soon as he went to sleep, they meant to carry him down to torment; an' he dursn't go to bed for nights together, for jest as sure as he laid down, they was all round him, whisperin' an' plannin' how to do it. You never see a poor soul so tormented in all your life. 'Good devils,' sez he, 'do go to some one else, an' let a body git a leetle rest. There's Squire Lincum. Why don't you take him? He drinks as hard as I do.'

"But they never left him, night nor day. One day he wandered off in the fields somewhere, an' when night come he went to a tarven down by the big creek, an' he axed Bill Long, the landlord, to shet him up in a leetle tight bunk there was under the counter; for he thought, mebbe, in that little, close, dark place he could hide away. But, Grandfather Grievous! the minit his head teched the pillar, they was round him as thick as bees, whisperin' to each other that he couldn't stan' it much longer; an' then they laughed sich a horrid laugh that father's hair riz right up, an' he lay in awful agony, an' never shet his eyes all night.

"He staggered hum the next day, a-shakin' all over, an' so weak he couldn't but jest stand; for all this time, yer see, he hadn't slep' a wink. An' his head was so hot 'twould have sizzled if you'd put it in water, an' his hands an' feet was chunks of ice.

"When night come, sez I, 'Father, you go to bed, an' let me set by ye, an' see if I can't keep them pesky critturs off.' Good laud! what a night that was! I had to call in the neighbors to help me. One minit they was stickin' pins in him, or droppin' burnin' coals on his head, or scorchin' him with red-hot pinchers, an' he screechin' an' howlin', an' cussin' an' blasphemin', till some on 'em couldn't stand it. I allus thought Mose Allen had grit; but if that feller didn't turn as white as a cloth, an' clap both hands to his ears, an' run out o' doors! 'He'll die if he

don't go to sleep,' sez Dr. Fudge. 'I shall die if I do,' sez father.

'Well, I see by an' by he was clear tuckered out. His hands was as cold as ice, an' he kep' a-clawin', feeble-like, at somethin' overhead, an' moanin' an' mutterin'; an once in a while he made a queer rattlin' noise in his throat. 'Father,' sez I, 'do try and git a little rest.' He gin me a dretful look. 'Don't let me go to sleep,' sez he; 'O, don't let me go to sleep!' 'Fore he got through speakin', his eyes begun to drop. I see he was dead sleepy, an' I was goin' to rouse him; but Dr. Fudge he caught me by the arm, an' sez he, 'You wake him if you dare. His life depends on his gittin' a long rest.' Well, he slep', mebbe five minits, an' then he riz right up, with a yell that made my blood run cold. 'They've got me! they've got me!' sez he, an' went inter a fit. Soon as ever he come out of it, he went into another, an' so on till he'd had four. Then he seemed to kinder come to, an' he looked at me mighty pitiful, an' sez he, 'Huldy, for the Lord's sake, gin me some rum.'

"It's been a great consolation to me," said Huldah, "that he died pious."

At this strange conclusion to her story I looked at the woman in amazement. "Does she believe this?" I said to myself. "Can she be cheating her soul with the delusion that such a life ended in a pious death?" She sat wiping her eyes with her apron, an expression of quiet resignation on her face that I am sure was not assumed, I did not trouble her satisfied heart with my doubts; but I marvelled greatly at the faith that could build so stout a hope on so slender a foundation.

"Huldah," said I, "tell that story to Phil Barry, when he gets well, and he will never touch a drop of liquor again as long as he lives."

Huldah laughed outright.

"Tell him a dozen sech stories," said she, "an' he'll never drink one dram the less. How green you be, gal! A man may have the horrors as bad as father, only not die in 'em, an' you may fetch a quart o' rum, an' sez you, 'Drink this, an' you'll have another wuss spell, or let it alone, an' be a well man,' an' if that poor misguided crittur don't choose the liquor, my name ain't Huldy Billins. An' he can't but choose it, if he knows it'll kill him. 'Cause why? It's his master. Sez Mose Allen—he allus put things strong,—'When a man gits to a sartin pint in drinkin', he loves it better'n he loves hum, or wife, or children, or heaven, or God. Why, there ain't nothin' left on him,' sez Mose, sez he, 'but his love of rum,—a poor weak creetur, his pride an' his ambition clean gone, an' jest one thing strong about him, an' that a-growin' stronger an' stronger every day, till it eats him up.'"

"What became of Mose Allen when your

father died?" I inquired; for she so frequently made him her oracle that my curiosity was excited.

"He lived with father seven years," said Huldah, "an' goin' on eight. When we broke up, he moved to the west'ard; bought a farm out in Michigany, somewhere in the river country. A dretful flat, marshy place, folks said. Didn't do much the fust two years but shake with fever an' ager. But, massy to me! it didn't shake off none o' her fat. 'Fore that woman was forty year old she was as broad as she was long."

"O, he married—did he?"

"Married!" said Huldah, spitefully. "He married old Sam Risley's darter. Her father used to peddle clams for a livin', an' his'n was a cattle-driver. There's family for yer! A gal with a pink an' white doll-baby face, and a regelar little squat figur'. I'd rather be a bean-pole than a butter-tub. An' they do say Mose got to be a regelar skinflint; so awful tight he'd cheat his own father out of his eye-teeth for the sake of a few coppers. So she didn't git no great shakes arter all." Ah, Huldah, were the grapes sour?

"Well," said Huldah, "I reckon I've talked enough an' them cellar stairs have got to be scrubbed down afore dinner."

"And I must go to Mrs. Barry," I said.

"You let her be," said Huldah, in what I afterwards remembered as a significant tone. "She's all right. If she wants to lie quiet in bed for a day or two, don't you go to disturbin' of her; for it's the best thing she can do."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THIRD STAGE OF THE DISEASE.

"O, wretched state! O, bosom black as death."

"O, thou eternal mover of the heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch;
O, beat away the busy, meddling fiend
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
And from this bosom purge this black despair."
Shakespeare.

I think it was the day after the conversation just narrated, that Philip Barry, in one of his intervals of quiet, called for his mother; and when they told him she was ill, and could not come to him, he said, fretfully, that "he wanted some woman about him, the men were so rough." They had need to be rough at times. His father, who was unwearied in his attendance upon the sick-room, scarcely leaving it day or night, desiring to do everything in his power to alleviate the poor boy's sufferings, and gratify his every wish, sent for me.

I obeyed the summons with the greatest reluctance; but all personal dislike gave place to feelings of the deepest pity the moment I entered the chamber of the unhappy young

man. He was lying, partly dressed, upon the bed. The peculiar wildness of countenance and hurried, anxious manner, I noticed on the morning of his attack, had increased a hundred fold. His face was dreadfully pale and haggard, and his eyes sunk deep in their sockets. When I touched his hand, it was so cold and clammy that I could hardly repress a shudder; but his head was burning hot, and the long hair he used to spend hours in dressing and perfuming lay, all wet with perspiration, in tangled masses on the pillow. I brushed it away, and laid my hand upon his temples; and he smiled, and said it felt cool and good. He took his medicine from me quietly, too; and when a paroxysm of the disease came on, he listened to me when no one else could influence him; and when I attempted to leave the room, he called me back, excitedly. The doctor's orders were, that all irritating contentions should be avoided, and the patient's wishes, in all cases when not likely to prove injurious to him, be indulged; so I had no alternative but to remain, and my time, for the next two days, was divided between the sick-rooms.

Mrs. Barry needed little of my attention. She begged, when I came to her with a cup of tea, or some simple nourishment, to be let alone, and lay in a stupid, half-sleeping state all day. About noon, the second day, entering her room suddenly, I discovered an unmistakable smell of liquor, and saw the neck of a black bottle protruding from under her pillow. How she obtained it I could not imagine, for I strictly obeyed Mr. Barry's injunction, and locked her door every time I left the room. I was on my way, bottle in hand, to find Mr. Barry, when I met Huldah. In those days she was always prowling about the halls, and coming suddenly upon one from unexpected nooks and corners. I tried to hide the bottle in the folds of my dress, but her keen eyes detected the movement.

"Give me my bottle," she said.

"Your bottle! O Huldah, I have just found it under Mrs. Barry's pillow."

"Well, supposin' you have; that don't hinder its bein' mine—does it? Now, don't stand there sayin', 'O Huldah,' an' lookin' at me as though I'd broke all ten commandments at one jump; but take that poor cretur back the only comfort that's left her in this world. Take it back, I say," stamping her foot.

"I shall do no such thing," I replied. "If you choose to supply her with poison and sure death, you shall do it without my help. And what's more, I'll hinder you all I can. O Huldah, for shame! Take back your bottle, or I'll throw it out of the window."

"An' what's goin' to become of her, I'd like to know?" said Huldah, in a towering passion; "yer all of yer off in t'other room, tendin' up to that young limb that allus was the devil's own, an' ain't wuth the care yer gin him, an' leavin' that sweet cretur all sole alone, locked

up in her chamber, with not a drop to bless herself with. But she shall have it, if I climb the ruff an' drop it down the chimbley to her. She's got *one* friend left, any how."

"A friend!" I said, indignantly. "Now, Huldah, I can't stand here pleading with you; but you know very well, if I were to tell Mr. Barry what you have done, you would never be allowed to set foot in this house again. But I am sure you will not oblige me to take this course. Will you take back your bottle?"

Her good sense convinced her at once of the truth of what I said, and she changed her tactics.

"How did you get it to her, Huldah?" I asked.

"Well, I'll tell you," she said, with a grin of triumph. "That night, arter you went home, I was a-listenin' at Mis' Barry's door, an' she did take on dretful, an' I could see her, through the key-hole, a-walkin' up an' down, a-twistin' her hands, and a-cryin' fit to break yer heart. An' sez I, 'Mis' Barry,' an' she knew my voice, an' sez she, 'O Huldah, is that you? Do git me somethin' to drink. I'm locked in here,' sez she, 'an' I'm a-dyin' for the want o' somethin' to drink.' 'Yer poor soul,' sez I, 'yer shall hev it. Yer come close to the door, an' hear to me, an' do jest as I tell yer, Mis' Barry, an' we'll come it over'em as sure as my name's Huldah Billins. Yer wait till it's dark,' sez I, 'an' thin yer take a good stout string, long enough to reach to the ground, an' let it out o' the west window, an' yer'll find somethin' tied on to the eend on't. Draw it up stiddy,' sez I. Well, I'd jest had this ere filled," said Huldah, with a loving look at the black bottle, "an' it holds a chuckin' full quart, and cost me forty cents, if it cost a penny; but, dear knows, I didn't begrudge it. I jest took one good swig, an' then I corked it up tight, an' I put it in my yarb basket, an' tucked an old apron all round it to keep it stiddy; an' when it was right dark, I tied it on to the string, an' Mis' Barry drewed it up, an' that's the way we done it; an' she's been as peaceable as a lamb an' as happy as a queen, ever sence," said Huldah.

Of the scenes I witnessed, those two days, in Philip Barry's room, I wish I need not speak. Dr. Sharpe gave great hopes of his recovery. It was his first attack, he said to the anxious father; his youth and good constitution were greatly in his favor; so far as he could judge, the case was not complicated by the presence of any other disease; and though the remedies administered had not produced immediate relief, and he was sorry to observe that there were still marked signs of vascular excitement, as well as nervous and sensorial exhaustion, he had strong hopes that success would attend our efforts, &c., &c. But coming in the last morning, an' finding the patient had not closed his eyes all night, that his struggles had been frequent and violent, that his pulse was

quicker, though very weak, and that the tremor had increased in the hands, and was extending over the whole frame, he looked grave, and called for counsel.

All day the poor boy talked incessantly. No small troubles now. His fears were of something, great, high, deep, dark, overwhelming. It seemed as if his brain was suffused, crushed, stifled. And wonderful it was to mark the lightning-like rapidity with which his diseased imagination worked, painting scene after scene of horror in startling succession "The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly." His poor, trembling, sinking frame grew weaker with every struggle; but the soul was strong to suffer, mighty to endure. His father stood by and listened to agonizing appeals for the help he could not give.

"Father, father! come down here. Help! O! I'm sinking, lower and lower. Do reach something down. O, dear! it's so dark, and damp, and cold. Pull me out! You lazy fellows, pull me out, quick! Heave away! There I come! See that great rock rolling down on me! Where shall I go? Open the window! Open it! Break it! Smash it out! O, it's on me! Help me out! Try again! You don't try! Father, father! you don't try!"

There were oaths and curses mingled with this that I cannot transcribe. Pausing, from utter exhaustion, with great drops of anguish standing on his brow, he sobbed and cried piteously, because *we did not help him*. Then he began again.

"What's this round my neck? Here! untie it, Lizzie, do. It chokes me! Loosen it, quick. Not that way! You just pull it tighter! Nobody tries to help me. You'll kill me! You'll strangle me to death! I'm so tired! O, I'm so tired!"

"Don't let them in! Don't! Bar the windows! Lock the door! There's more than a hundred Indians outside! Don't you see them? See their eyes through the window! Hark! How they do yell! They are coming! Hide me somewhere! They'll murder me! Father, save me! O, dear! What shall I do?"

In the midst of one of these paroxysms, I saw his young brother standing with white, frightened face in the door-way, and I whispered to Mr. Barry that it was no place for the boy, and begged him to send him away. An expression of pain crossed the father's face, but he said, sternly, "Let him see it all," and called him to the bedside.

"See that water creeping up through the floor!" cried Philip. "How fast it rises! We shall all be drowned. How black and angry it looks! It's on the bed! O, how cold it is! It chills me to death! Let me out of this! I shall drown! I shall drown!"

"There they all are pictured on the wall in fire! There's the grapes I stole from my

little sick sister! There's the melons I took that moonshiny night from the poor widow's garden! There's the lame Tim's boat we went sailing in Sunday, and stove to pieces behind the rocks! There's the Bible I tore to pieces, and flung in the fire, in Turner's saloon! And here's *blood on the wall!* O my God! there's *blood on the wall!* My sins! my sins!"

They kept him on the bed by main force. But he was in every part of it; braced against the wall, defying his enemies, crouched in one corner, or covered with the blankets, trying to hide from them, or struggling to release himself from the attendants, that he might dart through the window, and so escape his tormentors. His looks of dread, his trembling frame, his bloodshot, glaring eyes, his ravings, his shudders, his fearful recoils from his enemies, I have no power to describe.

In the midst of it all, Huldah stole into the room, with an open Bible in her hand. It was an old leather-bound book, the leaves yellow with age. I knew at once that it was her father's Bible. No one spoke to her. I doubt if Mr. Barry saw her at first, so wholly was his attention given to his son. She took a seat near the bed, and, waiting till there was a pause in his ravings, she began to read, with inflection and emphasis peculiarly her own.

"And behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee look upon my son, for he is mine only child.

"And lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it tearth him that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him.

"And I besought thy disciples to cast him out, but they could not.

"And Jesus, answering, said, O, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you! Bring thy son hither.

"And as he was yet coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him to his father."

"Where is your Jesus?" said Philip Barry.

"Pray to him, some of you. Father, pray to him to come and heal *your* son. All of you pray." He put his shaking hands together. "'Now I lay me down to sleep.'" A few years before, he uttered that prayer, an innocent child, at his mother's knee; now, before he half finished it, he broke into the most horrid oaths and blasphemies.

"My God!" said Mr. Barry, "he is lost forever!"

He caught the word, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"

"My son," said his father, "would you like to see the minister?"

"Yes, yes; send for the minister, and let him pray me into hell."

When Mr. Elliott came, I stole from the room. In the library I found Dr. Sharpe,

looking over his morning paper. As I turned to leave the room, Huldah entered, and, closing the door behind her, marched straight to the doctor's chair.

"Can you sleep nights?" she said.

He look at her in blank amazement.

"Can you sleep nights?" she repeated, in her highest key. "Don't you have bad dreams? Don't that poor ruined cretur up stairs, crazy for the drink she can't live without, an' that'll kill her if she takes it,—an, plenty more you've made jest like her,—appear to yer in the darkness?"

"Is the woman drunk or mad?" said Dr. Sharpe.

"Mad," said Huldah, "with you an' your tribe. You ought to hang out your sign over the graveyard, for there's where you fetch up yer patients. You stay where you be."

The doctor had started for the door; but she reached it first, and, standing before it, drew herself to her full height, and fairly shook her fist in his face.

"You stay where you be," she repeated, "or it'll be the wuss for yer."

She was at least a head taller than Dr. Sharpe, and looked so greatly his superior in physical strength, and so equal to any amount of personal violence she might choose to inflict, that, I think, he gave up all thought of resistance, only looking round, in a helpless, bewildered kind of way, in search of assistance. I confess I enjoyed his discomfiture.

"Why, what a mean-spirited, pink-livered old gum you be!" said Huldah, surveying him, from her height, with a look of sovereign contempt. "I don't wonder at it, nuther. A man, with as mean a bizness as yourn, can't help lookin' streaked. Ain't yer shamed yerself, you flambergasted old frizzle-top! What's the good o' temperance societies, an' prohibitory laws, an' sich like, while you an' yer tribe are all over the country feedin' it out to the gentry for medicine? Medicine! That poor cretur up charmbur sent for yer to cure her *body*, an' you gin her of the river of hell to drink, an' pizened her, *body* an' *soul*. That's what you did, you bloodsuckin' old gallipot! An' you go struttin' about like a turkey-cock, an' chuck the gold inter your mon-y-bag; but it's the price o' souls, an' there'll come a day o' reckonin', too, as sure as there's a God Almighty in heaven. An' when you see them poor creturs, in the day o' judgment, a-p'intin' their fingers at yer, an' callin' out, in the midst o' their torments, 'There he comes! There's the man that put the bottle to our lips, and coaxed us to take it for medicine,' you'll look streekedern you do now, you venomous old sarpint! An' yer knees'll shake, an' you'll look all round for some leetle hole to crawl inter, an' you'll call on the rocks to fall on yer, an' the mountains to cover yer from the wrath of the Lord God Almighty. But"—raising her voice to an awful scream—"there's a bed of fire and brim-

stone all ready for yer; and if there's a low place in hell, its for whiskey doctors."

At this moment the handle of the door was turned on the outside, and Huldah relinquishing her position, though she could not resist a parting shake of her fist in the doctor's face, Mr. Elliott entered the room. He was too much agitated to notice the pantomime, or the doctor's disconcerted appearance, but walked up and down the room two or three times without speaking. Meanwhile the doctor smoothed his ruffled plumage, and was himself again.

He was the first to break the silence.

"You find the patient sinking fast," he said.

"I pray God," said the young minister, in great agitation, "that I may never be called to such another death-bed as his."

"You are too sensitive," said Dr. Sharpe. "The phenomenon of the disease in its third and last stage is always distressing; but in your and my profession we become accustomed to such scenes."

"I have seen men die," said Mr. Elliott. "In my ministerial experience, short as it has been, I have stood by many death-beds; but I have never seen anything like this. I have heard a dying infidel sullenly wish there was no God, and the careless sinner plead hopelessly for mercy, and a false religious professor agonize in the hollowness of a hypocrite's hope; but all put together, they cannot compare with the agony of that wretched boy's spirit, just ready to leave its flaming tenement. It was in my heart to pray that death might speedily end his sufferings; but the words choked me as they rose to my lips, for how could I hasten a wretch, with his cup of iniquity full to overflowing, all loathsome and polluted with sin, and with horrid oaths and blasphemies on his lips, into the presence of his angry Maker. To be utterly forsaken of God, and tortured by the united powers of earth and hell, with not one hope left, not one place of refuge remaining, the body on fire, the soul already in hell—that is *delirium tremens*."

"You speak strongly," said Dr. Sharpe.

"I feel strongly. 'My brother's blood cries to me from the ground.' I have been dumb on the subject of temperance; but, God helping me, I will be dumb no longer. My example, my influence, my preaching, shall go against the horrid thing that has brought that wretched boy to his bed of death to-day."

In the bland smile with which Dr. Sharpe regarded him, I fancied I saw a little contempt.

"You are excited, Mr. Elliott. You have confined yourself too closely to your study. Your nervous system is quite unstrung. I should recommend—"

Stimulant, perhaps. I do not know, for he was hastily summoned to the sick-room.

Thank God, it was almost over! The delirium sank to low muttering. The trembling hands went searching after objects he saw on the bed, or floating in the air. Gradually the dreadful acuteness of sense and nerve passed away, and was succeeded by a quiet, unconscious state, which the doctor called *coma*.

And so he died. His father closed the staring eyes, still seeming to look at some horrid object, folded the poor tired hands, still at last, and went up to his chamber. And as he went, he wept, and thus he said: "O, my son, my son! Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!"

An awful stillness was in the house. From that closed room came no more shrieks and groans, and agonized entreaties. His last prayer was uttered. When he was robbed for he grave they called me in to arrange his hair, lying all matted and dishevelled upon the pillow. I parted the bright, chestnut locks from his broad forehead. I looked at his fair, regular features, from which the look of horror had disappeared, and I thought how beautiful, and nobl-, and good he might have been but for the curse of strong drink. Then my heart went up in earnest prayer for his young brother, that the providence might be blessed to his soul, and going forth from this bed of death to a new life, and walking in the paths of virtue and religion, he might be a blessing to the Church and to the world, and bring peace and consolation to his father's disappointed, broken heart. I prayed for his mother, that reason and conscience might once more assert their claim, and she be saved even at the eleventh hour. Then I went out, and closed the door.

The air of the house oppressed me, and just at evening I stepped out upon the side piazza. Sam Barry was there crouched upon the door-step, his face hidden in his hands.

He looked up as I opened the door, and I saw traces of tears on his cheeks.

"It's awful in the house," he said; "I can't stay there; I can hear him groan all the time; I hear him now; I shall never forget it as long as I live. O, what did father make me stay there for?"

He shuddered and sobbed, and then, ashamed that a woman should see him cry, dashed away his tears. I sat down on the door-step by his side; but I did not dare to say a word. I felt that God was speaking to him.

"Where is he? What is he doing? Will God let him suffer as he did here, and forever? Lizzie, I can't bear it!"

The picture of that wretched young man's agony, so frightful to witness that we thanked God when death ended it, continued, perpetu-

ated for months, for years, for millions upon millions of ages, and then only just commencing, not one step nearer a conclusion, filled my soul with horror. It was too mysteriously awful to look upon. I prayed for piety to maintain a feeling of humble submission towards the all-wise and righteous God, the Disposer of human existence.

"Hush," I said, "don't think of it. We must leave him in God's hands; only remember this, Sam, all the horror and blackness, the guilt, and misery, and remorse of that death-bed, were caused by drink; and if you are ever tempted to put a glass of liquor to your lips, I hope the remembrance of what you see there will cause you to dash it to the ground.

"I hate it," said Sam; "I will never touch a drop as long as I live."

"Don't make that vow in your own strength," I said; "you need all Heaven to help you. You are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against the powers of darkness. God must aid you, or you are lost."

"Then why do good men use it, and tempt their children to be drunkards?" said the boy, passionately. "I remember when he" — with frightened look over his shoulder — "used to go round the table and sip the wine from the bottom of the glasses, and they laughed, and called him a 'little toper'; and my father drinks it with his dinner, and my mother takes it for medicine, and —"

He stopped suddenly, for Mr. Barry stood before us, coming round the house unperceived in the twilight. I do not know how much he heard; but the outline of his face against the clear evening sky looked very stern and sad.

"Father, help me," said the boy, springing up, and coming close to where the tall figure stood looking down upon us. "You made me stay in there and see him die, and I know what killed him. I hate it! I hate the poison that killed my brother! I want to keep clear of it; and how can I, when you drink it every day with your dinner, and give it to your friends, and call it one of the 'good gifts of God?' Father, is it 'a good gift of God?'"

Mr. Barry winced at the question; but he answered never a word, only he took the child's hand in his, and drew him closer to his side. The action touched Sam's affectionate heart.

"You have only me now, father," he said, "and I am going to try and make you happy. I want to love God. I want to do right. I want to grow up a good, useful man. Father, dear father, will you help me?"

I slipped quietly away, — it was no scene for spectators, — and left the father and son standing, hand in hand, under the starlight.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TEMPERANCE MEETING.

"I will not touch thee; for there clings
A scorpion to thy side, that stings."
—*Pierpont.*

Mrs. Barry, locked in her room, and stupefied by the contents of Huldah's black bottle, knew nothing of the sad event just related till all was over. Two or three times, during the last day of her son's life, she partially aroused herself, to ask, in a fretful way, why there was so much noise in the house, complaining that it made her head ache, and wishing me to tell Sam not to talk so loudly in the hall. But she relapsed immediately into a dozing, half-unconscious state until the end came. Then there was a change. How much of the sad story—whether all, or only a part—her husband told her, I never knew; but its effect upon her was wonderful. In the agony of her grief, the appetite that held her so long in its bondage seemed, for a time, to lose all power—this sudden sorrow coming to her with such overwhelming force, and so filling her passionate nature, as to shut out every other feeling; for Mrs. Barry was a devoted mother, and the poor boy lying robed for the grave, in that upper chamber, was her first-born. After the paroxysm of grief was over, she was comparatively calm, and more like herself than I had seen her for months.

The evening before the funeral—a balmy Sabbath evening—she sat with her husband, in the twilight, and talked of her lost boy. Her low, clear voice, a little tremulous and broken, but wonderfully sweet in tone, came to me through the open door.

"Philip," she said, "do you remember how he looked when he was a baby, and how glad you were to have a son? Do you remember his eyes, how blue they were, and how plump and fair he was? And his hair! O, was there ever such lovely golden hair!—and it grew so fast that, before he was a year old, it hung down his face and over his bosom. I have one of those long curls yet. How proud and happy I was! I used to lie and look at him, in a kind of ecstasy, he was so perfect, so beautiful!—Was he indeed mine? My life, those first few weeks, was one prayer of gratitude to God for giving me such a treasure. When he was a month old, you know, I took cold, and was dangerously ill with fever. Well, it was hard to think of dying; life was beautiful to me then; but the hardest thing about it was to leave my baby. It seemed to me I could not die. I must live to see him grow up to be a man.

"When he was four years old, he had the scarlet fever, you know. You don't remember it as I do. Men never remember such things as women do. All one night—the night after Dr. Burton called in counsel—I

held him on my knees, and prayed. O, how I prayed for his life! I could pray for nothing else. I knew I ought to feel submissive to God's will. I tried to say, 'But if Thou hast otherwise determined—,' but every time I came to the words I stopped. I could not speak them. My heart cried out, 'No, no.' And at last I said, 'O God, send any other trial, but give me the child's life.' My husband, God took me at my word. My baby! my beautiful, innocent baby!"

The next day we buried him out of our sight. On his costly coffin, round his pale face, and in those nerveless hands, we laid pure, sweet, white flowers. We tried to think of him when he was an innocent child, and his mother loved him as only a mother can love. We tried not to think of his mis-spent life, his awful sufferings, his premature death, and the dread beyond. We looked up at the blue heaven, so wide, so mercifully wide, for all the sorrowful, and for the sinning, too, thank God, if, even at the last hour, they repent and cry for mercy. But his dying words, "Lost! lost! lost!" rang in our ears, and we could not be deceived.

From that dishonored grave I hastened to the bedside of one inexpressibly dear to me, who lay hovering between life and death. For days it seemed that to Philip Barry's many crimes would be added that of murder; but God was very good to me, and Frank Stanley did not die. Thanks to a good constitution, and, as Huldah said, "in spite of the doctors," he struggled through a long illness. But my mother, wearied with constant watching, greatly needed my assistance; and as I knew Mr. Barry would be much at home, for a few days at least, I did not hesitate to ask leave of absence. It was readily granted, and so it was my happy lot to nurse the dear one back to life again.

And a very quiet, prudent nurse I proved myself to be this time, calling forth even my mother's approbation; making no violent demonstrations, as on a former occasion, to bring the fever flush to that pale cheek, but striving, by extra care and discretion, to atone for former errors. I prohibited all exciting topics of conversation in the sick-room, and enforced my commands with so much rigor that Frank declared "I ruled him with a rod of iron."

But one evening he seemed so comfortable that I ventured to ask a question.

"Frank," I said, "what was it Philip Barry said about me in Turner's saloon that evening that made you so angry, and commenced the quarrel?"

"It is too ridiculous to repeat, Lizzie; and it shows what a fool drunk made of me that I could care for such a wild story. But he said he saw you, after nine o'clock that same evening, coming out of Paddy O'Flannigan's rum-shop with a jug in your hand."

"O Frank, it was his own mother!"

Busy and happy as I was in my new employment, and feeling that my mistress was safe in her husband's care, I did not go to Mr. Barry's house for several days, or, indeed, until he sent for me. As I passed the library door, on my way to his wife's room, he called me in. He looked old and care-worn, and I noticed, for the first time, that his black hair was streaked with gray. In a few words he informed me that, after consultation with Dr. Sharpe, he had decided to send Mrs. Barry, for a few months, to a private asylum for inebriates, in a neighboring State, and he wished me to prepare her wardrobe, and pack her trunks, preparatory to the journey. In his hard way, without a touch of feeling in his voice, this was said; but I knew the cup of his humiliation was full, and that the proud man's heart was well nigh broken.

"It's time you was back," said Huldah, following me up stairs. "Sich carryins on I never see."

"How is Mrs. Barry, Huldah?"

"How is she? She's as bad as bad can be. An' you might a-known she would be, when you went off to nuss yer sweetheart,—he is yer sweetheart, for all yer was so 'shamed on him t'other night,—an' left him to look arter that poor cretur; as if he could do anything. I never see a man yit that could manage women folks—and he last of all."

"What was the trouble?"

"Well, not much. Only, afore that boy was cold in his grave, his mother was dead drunk on the chamber floor; an' she's been that way the biggest part o' the time ever sence."

"O Huldah, why didn't Mr. Barry—?"

"Yes, that's it," said Huldah; "'why didn't Mr. Barry?' Well, you can ax him, if yer a mind to. All I know is, he sot there in his cheer from mornin' till night, with his elbows on the table, and his hands in his hair. That's the way he 'tended up to her—poor cretur, sobbin' her life away, till she got a drop to comfort herself with."

"Where did she get it?" I asked, suspecting the black bottle.

"Dear knows," said Huldah; "I don't. You needn't look at me, gal; but there was ways enuff; 'cause, you see, she warn't locked up any more that was played out. But there! it's no use tryin' to keep it from her. You may jest as well give it up. We can't do nothin' more for her."

"We can pray for her," I said, more to myself than to Huldah.

"Good land! child, I have, till I'm tired on't. Only yesterday, sez I, 'O Lord, do keep her sober one day; an' if she warn't as drunk as a fiddler 'fore eleven o'clock in the forenoon! On gin, too!" said Huldah, in great disgust. "'I wish to gracious,' sez I, 'Mis' Barry,' when I see her so tipsy she couldn't walk straight, an' 'I wish to gracious,' sez I, 'if you will git

drunk, you'd git drunk respectable, an' stick to yer kind. You are a born lady," sez I, "—brandy, an' wine, an' sich, is for you; but gin—bah, Irish washwomen, an' poor lost critturs in the street, drink that," sez I. An' she laffed kinder silly-like, and sez she, 'Where's yer black bottle, Huldah?'"

With a heavy heart I prepared my mistress for a journey. Listless, apathetic, and stupid, from a week's drinking, she seemed scarcely to comprehend what all those preparations meant, or whether she was going; but when I bade her good-bye, she put her arms about my neck, and with tears streaming down her face, whispered, "I shall never be any better, Lizzie, never, never!"

"No more she won't," said Huldah, to whom I reported the despairing words, "It's as true as the Gospel. They may send her to all the 'sylums in the country; but them doctors will tell you, if they speak the truth, that where they do sometimes cure me, they don't never cure no women. I mean, when the habit's got a sure grip. Folk's send 'em there to save disgrace, an' git em out o' the way, jest as he has, an' they doctor 'em, an' watch 'em, an' keep the pizen away from 'em a spell, an' mebbe they think they are cured; but jest as soon as they let 'em out, they'll go at it agin. Women is so curus. A man, he go's stirrin' about, an' gits interested in bizness and politics, an' sometimes he forgits; but a woman, she stays to hum, an' she goes round and round, in a leetle narrer circle, an' keeps a-thinkin', an' a-thinkin', an' she don't never forgit. She kinder lives in her loves and hates, yer see, an' so what she loves once she loves allus. An' thus, accordin' to scriptur, for sez Solomon, sez he, 'One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman have I not found; an' I reckon he'd ought to know, for he had enough on 'em round, with his seven hundred wives. Good land! I don't wonder they spiled him between 'em.'"

Mr. Barry accompanied his wife on her journey, and Sam was sent to school in the city. The boy's bright spirit was for the time thoroughly subdued, and the lesson he learned at his brother's death-bed he will never forget. I bade farewell to Bridget and Katie, who were to keep house till Mr. Barry's return, and left the house where I had witnessed so much splendid misery, and went back to my happy work. Huldah passed me on the gravel walk, dressed for a journey. Her whole wardrobe was disposed about her person, and her head was surmounted by three or four hideous black bonnets, perched one above another. As she passed me with rapid strides, I saw that her basket of herbs, from which the black bottle protruded, was on her arm.

Pleasant as it was, during the weeks that followed, to watch Frank's rapid progress towards health and strength, I would fain have prolonged those days of convalescence, it was so sweet to minister to him, and to feel that

he was dependent upon me; but in many years of married life, as happy as ever fell to the lot of woman, I have found a sweeter joy in the protection of that strong arm, an ever-growing happiness in the shelter of that loving heart.

Frank rose from his sick-bed an altered man. The vows he made in anguish of soul, and under the terror of death, he faithfully redeemed in the flush of returning health. The remainder of his youth, and the strength of his manhood, he gave to Christ, uniting himself to the people of God by public profession, and making it the great purpose of his life to work for Jesus.

We were married quietly, before the harvest moon was at its full. The next spring my husband built a small cottage, where his father's farm-house used to stand; the old homestead was the only heritage farmer Stanley left his son. We urged my mother to give up her boarding-house, and make her home with us; but she decidedly, though gratefully, refused. "No," she said; "while God gives me health and strength to do for myself, I will be dependent upon no one, not even my own children. Besides, my way of life suits me. Father always said I had a head for business, and you know I have not been altogether unsuccessful." A neat little bank-book, that she subjected now and then to my husband's inspection, proved the truth of her words; and it began to be whispered about the neighborhood that "the widow Barton was forehanded, and had laid up something against a rainy day."

Soon after our marriage there was a temperance meeting held in town, and at the close of the service my husband stepped forward and signed the pledge; but, first he made a little speech.

"I used to hate temperance societies," said Frank, "and I had a great prejudice against the total abstinence pledge. It was well enough, I thought, for the drunkard in the gutter, a man so under the influence of a demoralizing and degrading appetite that he could no longer be called a free agent, but needed just such a powerful restraint; but it was greatly beneath a man's dignity to sign away his liberty. I should despise myself if I had not strength of mind, and sufficient self-control, to know when and where to stop in the use of any of God's gifts. Temperance, I maintained, was a higher virtue than abstinence, and I preferred and practised it, for use was right, and abuse was wrong; and the abuse of wine and strong drink by some did not warrant the negation of its use by all. If my neighbor chose to drink to excess, was I to deny myself an innocent gratification? That's the way I talked. Some here to-night have heard me, and they talk so themselves. I trust none will be led through any such bitter experience as mine to change these views; but I do hope my experience and my

testimony to-night may lead some of you to make this change with me, for I have left my seat to tell you that I am ready to go, heart and hand, with any organization that shall work to put down the accursed thing in our midst, and to put my name to this total abstinence pledge. For it is just what I need. I do not say that without it I should go back to the use of stimulants, for I have made a vow to God, which I believe is registered in heaven, never again to use intoxicating drink as a beverage. That vow I trust to keep, whether my name goes upon this paper or not; but I need the pledge to tell you all my purpose, and to help any, by my countenance and fellowship, who may be tempted and need this support. To any such I say to-night, 'Thus way, brother! Foot for foot I go with you. Be of good heart. Are there snares and pitfalls in the way? We will avoid them together. Lions in the path? Thank God, there's a stronger arm than mine can save you from them. They are chained, brother! they are chained! Give me your hand, and look up!'

Then he put his name to the paper, and two young men, one of them formerly an intimate friend of Phil Barry, and a hard drinker, came boldly forward and followed his example.

In the hush that ensued, Mr. Elliott rose to speak. His voice was low, and two or three times he paused overpowered by emotion. He spoke of a great wrong committed, and called himself an unfaithful shepherd in that he had kept back a part of the truth, and been hitherto silent on this great moral question of the day. He asked the forgiveness of his church and congregation, and made a solemn vow that henceforth, so long as God spared his life, his influence and example should be given in favor of total abstinence, and his pulpit should no longer be silent on the subject; for said he, "I believe that drink is breaking more hearts, bringing more distress into families, killing more bodies, and sending more souls to an eternity of misery, than all the other vices in this country put together. May God blast the tree that bears such apples of Sodom, and scatters its damnable seed broadcast over the land. And Christian people, yes,—and to my own shame I say it,—ministers of the Gospel, with all this misery before their eyes, touch the unclean thing, and defend its use. In view of my past, it is not for me to condemn others; but I call upon you, my dear Christian friends, on your knees, and over your Bibles, and with the example of Christ before you, to think of this question; and God help you to a right decision; and may you give yourselves, as I do to-night, in this good cause, until by God's blessing it shall triumph."

And nobly did our young minister fulfil his vow. This speech, and the course he openly pursued, created no small stir in his church and society, for some of his wealthiest parishioners were wine-drinking Christians.

To these he gave great offence. More than one leading man showed his displeasure by giving up his seat in church; others stormed and blustered; but Mr. Elliott proved himself as fearless and outspoken as before he had been timid and silent. There were a few staunch temperance men in the church who held up his hands, and the storm blew over. One of his firm friends and supporters was Mr. Barry, who, we learned long afterwards, made up from his own pocket the deficiency in funds occasioned by the withdrawal of the disaffected parishioners.

CHAP. XVIII.

OUR MINISTER.

"He quite forgot their vices in their woe.

And in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt, for all."

Goldsmith.

Notwithstanding the difference in age and character between Mr. Barry and our young minister,—Mr. Elliott was quiet, retiring, and studious, and Mr. Barry a bustling wide-awake business man,—they became, about this time, strongly attached to each other. By delicate sympathy, and kind, Christian ministrations, when Mr. Barry was well nigh broken-hearted at the loss of his son, the young minister wound himself about the proud man's heart. I think Mr. Barry told him all, giving him the history of a living grief that, perhaps, was harder to bear than the shame and disappointment that filled his heart when he laid his eldest son in a drunkard's grave. It must have been a blessed relief to the stricken man, whose idols lay shattered in the dust, to pour into the ears of a sympathizing Christian friend the story of his sorrows. The influence Mr. Elliott acquired over him in this way resulted in great good. Mr. Barry had never been an active Christian. By his wealth and influence he held the position of a leading man in the church and society. He hired one of the best slips, and, by his liberality, helped on the secular interests of the enterprise, but added nothing, hitherto, to its spiritual growth. By what faithful admonitions, and timely application of the truth, Mr. Elliott led him to see the hand of God in his affliction, I know not; but this was the happy result of their intimacy, and Mr. Barry became a humble Christian, inquiring, with heartfelt earnestness, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" In every good work he was his minister's right-hand man. It was pleasant to see them walking together in earnest consultation—Mr. Elliott, pale, slender, *spirituel* in appearance, but all on fire with eagerness, and gesticulating with both hands; and Mr. Barry, not quite so erect as in other days, and with his

black hair plentifully sprinkled with gray, listening, with love and reverence, to his young pastor's words.

My husband esteemed it a great honor when he was taken into these counsels, and the three worked well together. When Mr. Elliott wanted money, and a shrewd, business man's opinion and advice, he found an able assistant in Mr. Barry; for out-door work and active help, Frank was his man.

From Philip Barry's death-bed Mr. Elliott went out determined to lift up a warning voice, and, if possible, save the young men of our village from a similar fate.

"Is the young man Absalom safe?" was the text of one of his temperance sermons; and his earnest, affectionate appeals and solemn warnings, spoken with all the fervor of a soul fully roused to the magnitude of the evil he deplored, with all the love a faithful pastor feels for the precious souls committed to his charge, with all the eagerness of one who mourns over past indifference, and desires to atone, by unwearied exertions in the present, for former neglect, with the tears he could not restrain, made it an effective sermon.

This was but one of the many efforts he put forth for the salvation of this portion of his congregation. He made personal appeals to the young men themselves, and to their parents, that, if possible, all the restraints of a Christian home might be brought to bear upon them. He organized a Band of Hope, and put temperance songs and temperance mottoes in the mouths of the little ones of his congregation, and strong temperance principles in their hearts. Some one, in derision, called this little company "Elliott's Brigade," and the name flourished, and became a title of honor to all who could claim it.

Once only, after Mr. Elliott's public expression of his total-abstinence principles, was he insulted by an invitation to a party at which wine was offered to the guests. We heard, from one who was present, that he declined the glass Mrs. Clair offered him, with a few quiet words that made this part of the entertainment distasteful to most of the company, and that many glasses were set down untasted that evening. If the hostess intended to entrap and embarrass her minister, she was foiled in her attempt, as was her husband, when a case of choice French wine was left, in his name, as a gift, at Mr. Elliott's door. It was returned, with a note; of which Mr. Clair said nothing to his boon companions, to whom he had boasted that "the parson would accept his present, and drink it on the sly."

Yet these things were not done offensively. Mr. Elliott was quiet and retiring in manner, not in the least forth-putting, or opinionated, and he made fewer enemies by the course he pursued than many a less decided man. But it came to be clearly understood by the community, that in all companies, and under all circumstances, he was a total-abstinence man;

and many who differed from him in opinion respected and honored him for the consistent course he pursued. He hated the vice of intemperance, and fought it to the death; but his soul was drawn, in tenderest compassion, towards its victims. “He loathed the sin, but loved the sinner.” Many a poor drunkard, so demoralized and degraded by the habit, and so reckless and despairing, as, seemingly, to be lost to all sense of shame, has grown hopeful under this good man’s words of cheer. “Despair of no man,” was a favorite maxim with him, and I think he was never happier than when he succeeded in inspiring in some poor, desponding, sin-laden soul the feeling that he was not forsaken and given over by all men to destruction. He used to say that this was half the battle; that a man sunk low in this vice, who despises himself for a weakness which he has not strength to overcome, has a morbid consciousness that he is despised by others, that every man’s hand is against him, that no man cares for his soul; but once convince him to the contrary, and quicken into life the faintest spark of self-respect in his bosom, and, sullen and despairing as he may have been, that man will rouse himself, and make mighty efforts to break the chain that binds him. Believing this, our pastor sought out these lost ones, and, having found them, patiently, unweariedly, and with a love and tenderness that was truly Christ-like, sought to bring them back to the fold. He did not stand afar off, and fling bits of the Gospel at their heads, or, with pitying, but half-scornful eyes looking upon them, bid them come up to him, and learn how to be saved. *He went down to them.* He gave them his hand, yes, both hands, to lift them up, and his heart too; for, disgusting and polluted as they might be, he saw God’s image and superscription written on their foreheads, and he *loved them.*

He believed that in the Gospel of Christ lay the drunkard’s only hope of deliverance; that without this, vows, resolutions, and pledges are of little avail. In the strength of these, with the memory of remorse and dreadful suffering, the unhappy man may for a season resist the demon of drink within; but it is stronger than he, and, sooner or later, he will falter and fall. “Not by might, nor by power, but my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.” “The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whose putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”

Some of Mr. Elliott’s sermons were preached in strange places. In low grog-shops and gambling saloons he sought his unwilling listeners, and such was the power of his great loving heart over those who came under its influence, that these rough, wicked men stopped their oaths and blasphemies, and listened as he told them the story of the Cross. He has been known to single out from such a group a poor, trembling, half-palsied victim of rum, seemingly in the last stage of degradation, and, taking him by the hand, in simple

words, uttered with an earnestness and eloquence that few could resist, lead him away from his companions. He has been known to take such a one, ragged, filthy, and loathsome as he was, to his own home, to cheer, and comfort, and clothe him; to “be at daily charges with him,” and to try to awaken in his wretched, benumbed heart a desire for better things. This is how our minister went about preaching the Gospel of Christ. Is it strange that we loved him as we never loved a minister before?—that people called him “the poor man’s friend,” “the good Samaritan?” that little children ran to meet him in the streets, and people blessed him as he passed their doors? And who can estimate the good accomplished by one earnest, fearless worker for God, amid a host of time-serving, wine-bibbing ministers?

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.

“Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

“The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought in that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost.

“Behold, I am against the shepherds.”

CHAP. XIX.

“ISN'T IT TIME FOR MY BOURBON?”

“O, woe, deep woe, to earthly love’s fond trust,
When all at once has worshipped lies in dust.”

—Mrs. E. C. Embury.

Mrs. Barry remained at the asylum six months. When she returned she looked broken in health, a mere shadow of her former self; but we heard that she was cured. I saw her but seldom. There was too much consciousness of the past between us to make our intercourse pleasant. She lived in a retired way, and her former friends complained that she avoided them. After a few months she again left home, and people said she was boarding in the country. When, after a long absence, she returned, her face told a dreadful story. She was drinking again. I do not know whether she was sent to the asylum again, or to some other place of concealment and refuge. Mr. Barry never mentioned her name, and his intimate friends ceased to inquire for his wife. To the circle in which by her beauty and intelligence, she formerly shone as its brightest gem, she was dead.

From time to time, various reports were rife in the village concerning her. “She was living far away,” the gossips said, “hiding her shame in some lonely place, with only a strong, working-woman to take care of her.”

"She was hopelessly insane, and confined in a private mad-house, or, hiding away somewhere, was killing herself by the excessive use of opium." Wild and improbable as these rumors were, plenty of credulous people believed and circulated them; but the only tale I thought worthy of credence was told us by a lady residing in a neighboring town.

She was travelling, as she said, in the stage, one rainy day, the previous summer, over a lonely tract of country, between two mountain towns in Vermont. Just at night, as they climbed a long ascent, she saw from the coach window a woman toiling slowly up the hill. Her clothes, wet with the fine, cold rain that was falling, were dragged to the knees. She stepped to the side of the narrow road to allow the stage to pass, and resting a jug she carried upon a convenient rock, she bowed and courtesied to the passengers inside, with drunken politeness. It was too dark to distinguish the features of her face, but the hand she waved was small and white, and there was something in her attitude and gestures painfully familiar to Mrs.——.

"Do you know that poor creature?" she inquired of a fellow-passenger, a sturdy, well-to-do farmer, whom she judged from his conversation to belong to that section of the country.

"I have an outside acquaintance with her, marm," he replied. "I never spoke to the woman in my life, but I've passed her on this piece of road a considerable number of times, when I was driving my team. She lives up to the top of Cobble Hill, 'long with Jabe Fuller. Mis' Fuller, she looks after her. My woman says she don't see how in the world she finds time to do it, with all her dairy work, and a sight of other chores. But Mis' Fuller's smart, and knows what she's about, and they say he pays well."

"He? Who?"

"Why, her husband, to be sure. He's worth a power of money, but he can't live with his wife, 'cause she will drink and disgrace him; so he boards her up here, where she's out of sight mostly. It is a lonely place. That little brown house yonder is Jabe's nearest neighbor, and it's a good mile yet to the top of Cobble Hill."

"Has that wretched woman a mile farther to walk this cold, rainy night?"

"She's warm enough inside," he replied, laughing. "She's been down to the tavern to fill up the jug. They don't mean she shall help herself; Mis' Fuller deals it out to her; but she steals away sometimes,—a body can't keep track of her always,—and then she has a time. If she was my woman, I'd put a barrel of whiskey in the cellar, and give her the key; and the sooner she drank herself to death, the better 'twould be for her and all concerned."

"Do you know where her husband lives?" Mrs.——inquired.

"Well, I can't say as I do, though I may have heard the name of the town. Anyhow, it's in Connecticut, and not a great ways from Hartford. Do you know any of her folks?"

Mr. Barry, meanwhile, with the faithful Bridget for housekeeper, lived a sad, solitary life in the great house, his loneliness broken now and then by a visit from his only remaining child. Sam Barry was in college; and as years went by, and the awkward boy developed into an intelligent and cultivated young man, with little of his brother's personal beauty, it is true, but, thank God, with none of his vices, we saw that the father's heart was becoming more and more fixed upon his youngest son.

Meanwhile, my husband grew daily in the confidence of his employer, making himself so necessary to the establishment, that in the fifth year of our marriage he was taken into partnership, and the business prospered greatly.

All this time we saw little of Huldah. Two or three times she appeared suddenly, with herb basket and black bottle, and my cottage was scrubbed from garret to cellar; but she complained often of fatigue, was "clear tuckered out," as she expressed it, and we saw that gin, and hard work, and the rough life she had led for so many years, were telling at last upon her iron constitution. She was restless and uneasy, and departed as suddenly as she came; and from certain mysterious hints she dropped, I concluded she had ferreted out the place of Mrs. Barry's retreat.

One bleak day in November, after an unusually long absence, she stalked into my nursery, sat herself down in the nearest chair, and rocked her tall body to and fro with all her old energy. My baby looked at her with wide blue eyes; but she took no notice of the new comer, and I saw that her face was working with strong emotion.

"She's a-dyin'," she said, at length; "an' they won't let me come nigh her me, that held her in my arms when she was a baby."

"At home?" I said, for I knew, of course she spoke of Mrs. Barry.

"He's fetched her home to die," said Huldah, in great agitation. "He went up to that poor little mean place, where he's hid her away these three years, an' they told him she was most gone, an' if he wasn't a savage right out o' the woods, he'd let her die to hum; an' he's fetched her back, an' I've come a-foot from Varnon, since daylight, a purpose to see her, an' an old taller-faced nuss, with a nose all drawn one side from taking snuff, shet the door in my face. I'd like to git hold of her old mug," said Huldah, displaying some formidable-looking talons. "Thar ain't nobody got a better right to see Clary Hopkins die than what I have."

"Well, ask Mr Barry, Huldah. He knows how intimate you were with his wife's family, and that you have always had the liberty of the house. He will make it all right. You must go to him."

"I ain't a-goin' to do no sich thing," said Huldah, spitefully; "there never was no love lost between us, an' latterly he can't bear the sight o' me. I won't go near him. You ask him. He'll d anything for you."

I readily promised, and she went away satisfied. With a dull pain at my heart, I took the old familiar way to Mrs. Barry's room. Great Heaven! was that hideous, bloated thing, with flabby cheeks and red eyes, buddled in an unseemly heap upon the bed, the beautiful, graceful woman I saw first in that room years ago? With great difficulty I recalled myself to her remembrance. Every sense was numbed and deadened. There was a far-away look to her face, and the poor, bleared eyes seemed gazing at something a long distance off. I put my lips close to her ear, and called to her that it was Lizzie - Lizzie Barton: did she remember me? Could she speak to me? A faint gleam of intelligence crossed her features. Listening attentively, and watching at the same time the motion of her lips, I caught the words, "Lizzie, isn't it time for my Bourbon?" Then the far-away look came back. Presently there was an expression of pain on her face. "Dear Mrs. Barry," I said, "do you suffer much?" I repeated this many times before she understood me; then she replied, dreamily, "I think some one in the room is suffering," and sank down again.

The November wind blew the dead leaves all about my feet as I walked down the gravel path, and moaned round the house with a dreadful sound. Back again in my cottage home, I snatched my baby from her cradle, and holding her close to my heart, prayed that, beautiful and precious as she was to me, God would take her that hour, that moment, rather than let her grow up to such a life, and such a death.

My request for Huldah was readily granted, and she watched the faint spark of life go out. There was no change in Mrs. Barry. Her intellect was clouded to the last. "She never found her mind again," Huldah said; but when the end came, a very sweet delusion was given to her. She seemed to fondle an infant in her arms, crooning softly to it, and whispering snatches of baby-talk, and sweet cradle lullabys, and so, holding it close to her heart, she died, smiling. Was the angel of her infant daughter, taken from her when she was good, and innocent, and all that a mother should be, sent to comfort this poor woman in her dying hour? God knows. The dear heaven is wide, and He is very merciful, and we can leave her, tried, tempted, sinful, and sorrowing, in His hands.

CHAP. XX.

FROM THE COTTAGE TO THE MANSION.

"Ten years to-day she has been his.
He but begins to understand,
He says, the dignity and bliss
She gave him when she gave her hand."
— *Covestry Pastore.*

A few weeks after Mrs. Barry's death, Frank came in one day with a great piece of news.

"Lizzie, Mr. Barry is going abroad. Sam wants to visit the hospitals in France,—he is to be a doctor, you know,—and his father is going with him. They will probably be absent two years, and I am to have charge of the business while he is absent. Now open your eyes wider still, for he offers his place for sale, and wants me to buy it."

"Wants you to buy the Barry place!" I exclaimed.

"Yes; why not?" said my husband. "This little pen did well enough for you and me; but now we are family folks"—with a glance at the cradle. "We need more room. Then your mother could live with us, and you would be saved the trouble, every time that baby sneezes, of sending a quarter of a mile down street to her, to know what is the matter; and, as she is such an independent lady, she can have a separate establishment of her own, if she likes, in that great house."

"But can we afford it, Frank? I don't mean the purchase of the property. That is but the beginning. It costs something, you know, to keep up such an establishment."

"Well, my prudent little wife," said Frank, laughing, "I think we can afford it, and if you will call to mind what I told you last night about the profits of the business last year,—and I am bound to make them greater this,—you will think so too. Now, madam, what further objections?"

"O Frank, we have been so happy here! This 'little pen,' as you call it, is the dearest spot on earth to me. I am afraid we shall not be as happy anywhere else."

Frank bent over me, and said something in the tone I best love to hear. No matter what it was. Lover's speeches will not bear repeating, and, though so long married, I still had a lover for a husband.

And so it came to pass that we built our altar, and set up our household gods, in Mr. Barry's old home; and though at first sad recollections clustered about that hearth-stone, and we needs must think sometimes of those who sinned and suffered there, as time rolled on, the happy present shut out the past, and the merry voices of our children drowned the sad notes of memory.

Yes, we are very happy. My dear mother sheds the light of her chastened spirit over our home. She seems a younger woman to me to-day than when, in the old brown house on the outskirts of the village, dispirited and broken-hearted, she dragged her weary round

of dally toil. And well she may; for the trouble that in those earlier days furrowed her brow and dimmed her eye has passed away; time has softened her regrets, and the comforts of religion have brought sweet peace to her soul. My brother and sister are growing up all that her heart can wish. They make the Louse merry with their childish sports, and my little ones join their tiny voices to the music, and roll and tumble on the grass the livelong summer day.

These little ones, to her great delight, cling to my mother more than to me; and it is a sweet picture to see her in her own cosy corner, my baby boy on her knee, and his sister on a footstool at her feet, listening, with rapt attention, while she tells them about the little black-eyed, curly-headed boy who died so long ago. Then my Lizzie—Frank must needs call our only daughter after me, though there are so many prettier names for girls—says, "Now, grandma, sing Johnny's 'Die no more,'" and my angel brother's favorite hymn comes softly to my ears. So the glory still streams from that little grave.

Yes, we are very happy. My husband is away all day; he is a great driver, and the weight of the business falls on his shoulders;—but in the evening he joins us, and in the bosom of his family, forgets all his cares. He frolics with the baby and plays with the children, the veriest child of them all, and gains strength and courage, he says, by his home happiness, for the toils of another day. To make this home beautiful, to be indeed to him "the angel of the house," is the height of my earthly ambition; and the joy that fills my breast as I read daily in the glance of his proud, loving eyes that I am successful, only happy wives can know. My "woman's right" is to love my husband, and be loved by him. Morning and evening from our happy, Christian fireside goes up a tribute of gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, from whose hand all these blessings flow. In our luxurious home, favored and prosperous as we are, we love to give of our abundance to those who are in need; for we remember that the sun was not always bright in our heaven, and the thought of our former poverty and care makes us, I think, pitiful and large-hearted towards others.

My brother Willie is a sturdy boy, with a perfect physical development, and a spirit as independent and self-reliant as his mother's own.

One evening, when he was about ten years old, we were all sitting round the fire, chatting cosily together, when something reminded me of an episode in the boy's early life, and, half playfully, half tearfully, I reminded mother of the time when she "gave away the baby." With boyish curiosity, Willie asked what we were talking about, and my mother gave him the outline of the story.

"Willie," she said, when she had finished,

"do you wish I had given you to the Clairs? You would be a gentleman's son now, with plenty of money in your pocket."

"A gentleman's son!" repeated my brother, scornfully. "I don't want to be a gentleman's son, loafing about with my hands in my pockets. I want to work for my living, and be a man."

"Good for you, Willie," said my husband; and I think my mother feels no further fear that Mrs. Clair's predicted curse will fall upon her head.

After Mrs. Barry's death her husband offered to provide Huldah with a comfortable home; but nothing could induce her to give up her wandering life. So she came and went as she pleased; but she had lost much of her former vigor, and year by year we saw that she failed. She felt, herself, that she had little left to live for, when her hope, her love, her pride, all lay buried in Clara Barry's grave.

It was a great joy to Mr. Barry when his son, after concluding his studies, decided to take up his residence and practise medicine in his native town. I know that he was influenced in coming to this decision by his filial affection, and desire to gratify his father's every wish; for he was ambitious, as a young man just starting in his profession, and desired a wider field of usefulness than our quiet village afforded. But Mr. Barry was greatly attached to the place, though it was the scene of his sorrows. Old people dislike a change, and Mr. Barry is getting to be an old man. His hair is silver white, and his step slow and somewhat faltering. But he is far more beloved and respected in the community than in the balmy days of his prosperity, for his ear is open to every cry of distress, and his ample means are given freely for the furtherance of every good cause. All that remains of his pride shows itself in his affection for his only remaining child; and it is beautiful to see the filial devotion with which his love is recompensed.

Blessings on Sam Barry's head!—for I must call him so still, though he has long since grown to man's estate, is accomplished and scholarly, and a well-established physician in his native town. But he is fresh, simple, and straightforward as of old; his love of fun and frolic chastened and subdued by contact with the sober realities and distresses of life, but sparkling and buoyant still, and possessing all the good qualities that made him my favorite when a boy, united to nobler and higher Christian virtues.

Yes, blessings on Sam Barry's head! His life is not easy. Night and day, in summer and winter, in rain and sunshine, through frost and snow, he goes his rounds a faithful, hard-working country doctor. "But verily he has his reward." He can scarcely walk the streets without hearing his own praise, or seeing them written in grateful eyes. He seldom

lies down to sleep without the consciousness that during the day he has relieved distress, and administered help and comfort to his fellow-creatures. For useful lives saved, under God, by his watchfulness and skill, men praise him, and from dying lips he often hears words of grateful affection and tender farewell.

Yes, blessings on the noble, skilful, temperance, Christian doctor!

CHAP. XXI.

THE SACRIFICE.

"How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!"

Dr. Sharpe after many years of successful practice, gradually lost his popularity. I never heard his medical skill doubted; but people said he was growing careless and neglectful of his patients; that the promptitude and decision which, contrasted with old Dr. Burton's deliberation, made him, when he first came among us, extremely popular, were succeeded by a selfishness and love of ease that often left his patients suffering for want of attention. It was whispered, as the cause of this change, that the doctor drank too much wine with his dinner; and though never seen intoxicated,—"to drink and be sober" was one of his favorite axioms—there were times when his head was not so clear, or his hand so steady, as they needed to be in a profession that, beyond all others, requires coolness, skill, and clearness of intellect.

These complaints were greatly to Dr. Barry's advantage. The young man, after years of patient up-hill labor in his profession, was gradually working his way into practice. Yet Dr. Sharpe held the pre-eminence, and the rumors against him assumed no definite form until he was guilty of a piece of mal-practice so utterly stupid and inexcusable in one of his knowledge and experience, and so dreadful in its results, as to draw upon him the indignation of the whole community.

Mr. Elliott was suffering from a severe attack of neuralgia, paying the penalty of overtaxing his nerves and brain, and Dr. Sharpe was his attending physician. The fourth morning of his illness, I called to inquire for him; and his young wife—only eighteen months before, Mr. Elliott brought his bride to the parsonage—met me with a frightened face.

"He is not nearly as well," she said; "he has had two dreadful turns this morning, like spasms, and is in great distress all the time. Dr. Sharpe is out of town, and will not return till noon. I really don't know what to do for him. Dear Mrs. Stanley, can you stay with me?"

She was a timid little blue-eyed woman, nervous, and unused to nursing the sick; and

I soon discovered that she was quite helpless in her husband's chamber.

"I have sent for Dr. Barry," she said; "but he is so young I don't like to trust him. O, I wish Dr. Sharpe was here!"

My first glance at Mr. Elliott told me he needed help, and that speedily; and a moment after, with a feeling of great relief, I heard Dr. Barry's quick step in the hall. He examined the patient carefully, and though I watched his face, it betrayed no emotion. Who ever learned anything from a doctor's face when he cared to conceal his feelings? Then he turned to Mrs. Elliott.

"What has your husband taken this morning?" he inquired.

"Only a little gruel, doctor, besides his medicine. Dr. Sharpe was here yesterday, soon after dinner, and said he was doing well. He sat down and wrote a prescription, but told me not to commence giving the new medicine till this morning, because he might not rest as well after it."

"Let me see the medicine," said Dr. Barry.

He shook the bottle, smelt and tasted its contents. "How much has he taken of this?" he inquired.

"Not more than three or four doses, doctor. I commenced giving it to him early this morning. He vomited dreadfully after taking the first dose."

"I must see the prescription," said Dr. Barry. "Will you send for it at once? Stay—I can go quicker myself." He hurried from the room.

I could not in the least understand these proceedings, and Mrs. Elliott exclaimed, "How strangely he acts! O, I wish Dr. Sharpe would come!"

Dr. Barry was back in a moment, for the drug store was just round the corner. He was breathless from the haste he had made, but did not pause an instant to recover himself. He flew to his case of medicines, and for the next two hours worked as I never saw a man work before. He administered powerful antidotes and emetics, using the stomach-pump freely; and when no relief was obtained, the distress continuing, accompanied by great faintness and exhaustion, and the difficulty of breathing increasing every moment, he resorted to artificial respiration. He worked silently, except as from time to time he gave me orders how to help him, in a low, stern voice. Of Mrs. Elliott's repeated exclamations, "O, I wish Dr. Sharpe would come!" he took no notice. Before he ceased his efforts, I felt that he was uselessly torturing a dying man, and I whispered to him my fears. He gave me a look of despair and rage I shall never forget.

Dr. Sharpe came at length, entering with his noiseless step. "And how are we this morning?" he commenced to say, but stopped short on seeing the young doctor.

"O Dr. Sharpe," said Mrs. Elliott—

She got no farther, for Dr. Barry seized him by the arm, and led him from the room.

"What does this mean?" said Dr. Sharpe, in astonishment.

For a moment the young man could find no words to reply. He still grasped the doctor's arm, and his eyes fairly blazed with anger.

"What does this mean?" repeated Dr. Sharpe, angrily, and trying to release himself.

"It means," said Sam Barry,—and the words came between his set teeth,—"that you are either a scoundrel or a fool. You have given that sick man, in three or four doses, poison enough to kill an ox."

"You puppy!" said Dr. Sharpe, his face purple with rage, "how dare you use such language to me?"

"Look here," said Dr. Barry, drawing a slip of paper from his pocket and thrusting it close to the doctor's face; "read your own writing—will you? and tell me what you meant by prescribing an ounce of deadly poison, to be given in twelve doses."

Dr. Sharpe fumbled in his pocket for his spectacles. "Ounce!" said he; "there's no ounce about it. I prescribed a drachm of veratrum viride, to be given in doses of five grains each." He perused the paper carefully. "I declare," said he, changing color, "it is ounce, but I meant drachm."

"In God's name, then, if you meant drachm, why didn't you say drachm? You fool! Have you practised medicine thirty years, and do you make such a blunder as to write ounce when you meant drachm?"

Dr. Sharpe was too much frightened to keep up a show of anger.

"It was a slip of the pencil," he said. "I declare I don't see how I did it, either."

"I do," said Dr. Barry. "You were drunk, sir! You make your boast that no man ever saw you the worse for liquor; but you wrote that prescription when your perception was inaccurate, your reasoning faculties obscure, and your whole brain confused by the wine you drank with your dinner; and in the sight of God, sir, you were drunk! For all the wealth of California I wouldn't put my soul in your soul's stead to-day, for before God you are guilty of the blood of that just man."

He would have said more, for Sam Barry's blood was up; but I touched his arm, and he checked himself.

"You are right, Lizzie," he said, unconsciously calling me by the old name; "this is no place for angry words, and the man's conscience, if he has one, will say harder things than I can speak.—Now go, and look at your work, you coward."

Dr. Sharpe at that moment deserved the name. He stood speechless before his accuser, the paper containing the proof of his guilt shaking in his hand.

He roused himself with an effort.

"Come," he said. "Why do we stand here? We will save him yet."

"It is what I have been trying to do," said Sam Barry, dryly, "for the last two hours."

When we re-entered the sick-room, Mrs. Elliott sprang forward to meet us, and, clinging to Dr. Sharpe's knees, sobbed out, "O doctor, save him! save him!"

At that moment I pitied Dr. Sharpe. He hurried to the bedside, gave one look at the sick man, and turned away.

"Doctor, is it death?" said Mr. Elliott, calmly.

He made no reply, and, after a moment's silence, Dr. Barry answered for him.

"It is death."

"God's will be done," said the minister.

Dr. Barry bent over him. The fierce anger was all gone from his face. His touch was as gentle and delicate as a woman's and his features beautiful in their expression of tenderness and compassion.

"Can I do anything for you?" he said. "Are there any directions you would like to give about your affairs?"

The dying man looked up with a smile.

"All settled long ago," he said. "I have not left worldly business for an hour like this. O, hush, my darling!"—to the poor young wife. "Try and bear it as well as you can. Remember we have an eternity to spend together."

When all was over, I heard Dr. Sharpe speaking earnestly, in a low voice, to Dr. Barry, who heard him in contemptuous silence, and, when he had finished, replied, with a stiff bow, "I shall say nothing, sir." I understood then that he was pledging the young doctor to secrecy; but he might have spared himself the humiliation. When Dr. Barry ran to the drug store, and demanded the prescription made up the previous evening for Mr. Elliott, his urgency admitted of so little delay that no copy of it was taken, nor did the druggist stop even to read the contents of the paper; but his curiosity was excited by the eagerness of the young doctor, and he questioned the clerk who prepared the medicine. The boy remembered putting up an ounce of veratrum viride. "Was he sure that it was an ounce?" "Yes; for he thought it was a large quantity, and looked a second time, to see if he was right."

"Then," said the druggist, very incantiously, "Dr. Sharpe has made a mistake; and if Mr. Elliott has taken that medicine, he is a dead man."

There were people lounging about the store, and the news flew like wildfire; and when Dr. Sharpe left the house of his victim, the mistake and its dreadful consequences were known to half the village.

A sudden death comes with startling power

to a community. Especially in a quiet village like ours, where there was little to vary the monotony of every-day life, the unexpected removal by death of the humblest citizen would be noticed and felt by all. But when a man like Mr. Elliott, for many years a resident among us, beloved and revered for his many excellencies, rendered prominent by his holy profession, and personally known to most of the people living in the place, is cut down by a single stroke, it is not strange that the town should be moved to its foundations.

His death was felt to be an overwhelming calamity. A settled gloom hung over the village. Business was, in a measure, suspended. In the families of his own congregation there was great weeping and lamentation. Men, women, and children thronged the parsonage lingering about, trying to learn the sad particulars, and then, seating themselves, silently remained in the same position for hours. Here and there little groups gathered at the corners of the streets, and talked together in low tones; but the general feeling seemed too deep to be expressed, and there was upon many faces a look of stern, suppressed indignation.

His unfinished sermon, and the pen so reluctantly laid aside that first day of his illness, lay upon his study table. His books of reference, open and scattered about; the Greek Testament he used at his private devotions, close at hand; the little memorandum-book, where, in a late entry, he reminded himself of a pastoral call to be made, a plan for good to be carried out, a poor person visited,—all these told of his busy, crowded, useful life; of the "purposes broken off" of "a sun gone down while it was yet day."

We buried him on a still, bright, summer afternoon. Over the doorstep his feet had trodden so many times, going in and out, in his faithful ministrations, they bore him; down the gravel walk he was wont to pace in the early summer morning, meditating upon his next Sunday's sermon; through the usually busy street, now silent as the grave, where in every store his face, and voice, and the grasp of his hand were familiar; past the green where he used to pause and watch the boys at their play, entering into the excitement of the game, and applauding, with voice and hand, the little fellow who struck the best ball; and then slowly, at the call of the familiar bell, up the hill to his own church, where only the last Sabbath he preached to us from these words: "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

He never ascended that hill so slowly before. Many times he has passed us on our way, with a quick, eager step, fresh from his study, his face aglow with enthusiasm, in haste to deliver his message. Coming down after the service, grieved, perhaps, at the inattention of some of his hearers, and, in his self-depre-

ciation, feeling that he had failed to make the desired impression, I have seen him, with drooping head and downcast eyes, walk slowly down the hill; but, loving his work,—it was his meat and his drink to preach the Gospel of Christ,—it was always with a joyous step and a beaming eye that he "went up to the house of God." To-day we followed him for the last time.

They bore him past the lecture-room,—how many words of prayer and exhortation have we there heard from those dear lips! then slowly up the aisle, till they rested their burden on the altar, over which, with clasped hands, he has blessed for us the sacramental bread and wine. When the casket was opened, we saw the pale face of our minister turned calmly up to the pulpit, from which it had long looked down upon us in love. "And looking steadfastly on him, we saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

At the grave we sang one of his favorite hymns, and then, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," we laid our treasure in the faithful bosom of the tomb, "in the assured hope of a glorious resurrection."

And we comforted one another with these words:—

"We sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so those also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

"So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Among the crowd of mourners who pressed forward to take their last look of the beloved remains, we saw those whom this good man, by long-continued efforts and unwearied gentleness and love, had rescued from the power of an evil habit. His "Band of Hope" was there, with temperance badges on their breasts; and we wondered as they sang their sweet hymn, standing about the grave, for the first time without a leader, whether he who trained those childish voices, and loved so dearly to sing with children on earth, might not have the privilege of training an infant choir in heaven.

There were hard-looking men at Mr. Elliott's funeral—men who paid no outward respect to religion, who never heard him preach in their lives, but who seemed impelled, as it were, to render this tribute to his memory. And among the recipients of his charity it was interesting to hear one and another say, "He was very generous to me, but he charged me not to speak of it;" or, "I am indebted to him for kindnesses

which I am not at liberty to mention." But one poor widow told a story, in her homely way, that illustrates one phase of his character so perfectly that I will relate it.

Mr. Elliott came to see her one day, she said, and when he went out of the yard she saw him look at the scanty remains of her wood-pile. Very soon came a large load, which the man who brought it said was sent by a friend. Who this friend was the widow readily guessed. Very early the next morning she was awakened by a slight noise in the yard, and, on rising and lifting the window-curtain a little way, she discovered, in the dim twilight of a winter's morning, her minister, his coat off, hard at work sawing her wood. "I knew," said the old lady, "the good soul came at that hour, long afore folks was up 'cause he didn't want his left hand should know what his right hand was doing,—and I wouldn't have spoilt the blessing for him for anything,—so I just crept back to bed again, and when it was daylight he went away; but the next morning he came back, and so on for three mornings. And I never told of it, nor so much as thanked him. But O, what wood that was! The Lord's blessing was on it. It seemed as though it would last all winter, and it warmed my heart as much as it warmed my bones."

While such beautiful deeds live in the hearts of his people, can we call our minister dead?

He is not dead, our dear departed friend.

We saw him carried to his narrow bed,
And grieved Affection cried, "Is this the end?"

Yet our hearts whispered, "*No, he is not dead.*"

Call that man dead who has no name to leave,
Whose aimless life 'tis kindness to forget,
Whose memory is as voiceless as his grave.

O, he is dead—our friend is living yet;—

Living in all the blessed doctrines he has taught;

Living in all his bright example shown;

Living in hearts whose burdens he has sought,
Whose cares and sorrows he has made his own.

The orphan and the widow hold him dear;

The Church is honored by the life he led;
His prayers, his sermons, all his labors here,
Are living yet. O, do not call him dead!

There is no death for those who love our Lord;—

Dry all your tears, and raise the drooping eye;—

No death for those who trust in Jesus' word:
"He that believeth Me shall never die."

CHAP. XXII.

CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST.

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us." *Shakespeare.*

When Dr. Sharpe left the parsonage his whole appearance and manner betrayed the discomposure within. He was closely watched, for the story of his mistake and its consequences was by this time known to half the town, and people peered curiously at him from doors and windows as he passed, and cursed him when his back was turned. Quite unconscious that his fame preceded him, the doctor walked slowly up the street, his eyes fastened on the ground, and an expression of perplexity and disgust upon his usually placid face. Once he was seen to strike his hands together in apparent vexation, as if angry with himself for the egregious blunder he had made. Perhaps, in his heart, he acknowledged the truth of Dr. Barry's accusation, and found a little consolation in the thought that his usually accurate perception was impaired, or for the time obscured, by the moderate or immoderate use of "one of the good gifts of God."

However this may be, he was wofully troubled. Dr. Sharpe lived upon the breath of popular applause. Ever since he came among us, it had been the height of his ambition to win golden opinions from all sorts of people. With his bland smile, and soft, ingratiating manner, he walked the streets, bowing and shaking hands with all he met, and by various methods endeavored to curry favor with high and low, rich and poor. He never once relaxed these efforts, or yielded to the indolence and selfish love of ease which were really a part of his nature, till he felt that his object was accomplished, and he stood in no danger of falling from the eminence to which he had climbed. Now, indeed, he seemed likely to fall in a hurry.

He knew perfectly well the position Mr. Elliott occupied in the community, and that in proportion to the love and reverence felt for the victim, would wrath and indignation be heaped upon the head of his destroyer. It had been better had Dr. Sharpe killed any three men in town than Rev. Mr. Elliott, and he was acute enough to know and feel it. No wonder he shrank from the coming storm, and forgot to bow and smile graciously to those he met that black Friday morning. I think, too, when he reached home, he forgot his favorite maxim, "to drink and be sober," for his house-keeper reported that he poured down glass after glass of wine and brandy, till "he was dead drunk in his chair," or, as the doctor himself would have more delicately expressed it, "till the narcotic influence of the stimulant deadened and quieted the nervous centres and the brain." Perhaps he comforted himself with the thought that Dr. Barry was pledged to secrecy, and the cause of Mr. Elliott's death

need never be known; but, if so, he was quickly undeceived, and his notoriety made manifest to him in very plain language.

He was called the next day to visit a sick child at the house of his friend and patron, Mrs. Clair. This lady, more successful in her second attempt to adopt a child than in her first was so happy to find a bright little orphan boy, four or five years old, whom she made her own. The child was slightly indisposed, and the anxious mother sent forthwith for Dr. Sharpe.

When he entered the nursery, the little fellow ran to the farthest corner of the room, and both command and entreaty failed to draw him from his retreat.

"Come and let me see your tongue, my little man," said the doctor, in his most seductive tones, "and then you shall sit on my knee and hear the tick, tick."

"Me won't" said the boy; "me sarnt let ou see me tongue, and me sarnt sit on ou knee, and me won't take ou nasty medicine, 'cause nurse says ou'll kill me as ou did the misinter. Go away, bad man! go away!"

Truly Dr. Sharpe was "wounded in the house of his friend."

When he entered the post-office that evening, where his neighbors were congregated, waiting for their letters, a sudden silence fell upon the crowd; and as he pushed his way forward, there was a backward movement, that left him standing quite alone in the middle of the room. He would have shaken hands with an acquaintance, but the man drew back, pretending not to observe the movement.

While Mr. Elliott lay dead in our midst, there was no outward expression given to the indignation so generally felt against the author of the deed; but when the last sad offices were rendered, and we returned to our homes "as sheep without a shepherd," grief gave place for a time to fiery wrath. In every house in the village, on every street corner, and gathering place, there was but one topic discussed. There were variations in the details of the story, but I believe the main facts were given correctly.

We must except Huldah's version. Up and down the street she went, telling in every house, with intense enjoyment of the horrid details of the story, how "the minister was pizened and died in awful fits; an' don't tell me," said Huldah, "about accidences, 'cause I don't believe a word on't. I know better; that critter done it a purpose."

I have seen the prescription that caused so much mischief. The mistake looks on paper like a little thing, but it cost a good man his life.

Dr. Sharpe rallied his forces, and for a while fought bravely. There are men in every town, and women, too, alas! ready to take a bad man's part, and raise the cry of persecution, especially is this true if he be a minister or a doctor. It would seem, often, that the worse the cause, the more zealous its defenders. If

any one doubts the truth of this statement, let him attempt to reason with such a person. Drive him step by step from his position, till you have left him not one inch of ground to stand upon, and though you have laid him flat, he is as unconvinced, and a hundred times more obstinate in his belief than before the contest. If your champion for the wrong be a woman, then are you to be doubly pitied. A man sometimes knows when he is floored—a woman, never.

"A great fuss about a little thing," Dr. Sharpe was heard to say one day to a group of his political friends. "Such mistakes are exceedingly common, only there is no publicity given to them. A man takes an overdose of medicine, and dies. What then? Is the attending physician censured? Not at all. He keeps the little mistake to himself, giving out that the man was suddenly attacked by some latent disease. That's the way we manage things in the city, gentlemen. Or a little slip of the surgeon's knife, a sixteenth of an inch in the wrong direction, perhaps touches a vital part, and life is destroyed. Who's going to know it? unless the surgeon tells the story, which he is not likely to do. The most skillful practitioners are liable to occasional mistakes. This excitement, gentlemen, is all caused by that meddling puppy of a doctor, who, had he possessed one grain of professional courtesy, would, when he discovered the state of the case, have held his tongue, instead of running after the prescription, and blurring out the mistake to the whole town."

This reasoning was not altogether satisfactory to his listeners. It may have occurred to them that one so well advised as to the best method of avoiding the unpleasant consequences of his mistake might be prone to repeat it, and that some day a second slip of the doctor's pencil might consign one or more of his particular friends to an untimely grave. Public opinion was too strong for him. One by one his friends left him. His practice fell off, and people who formerly were proud of his notice passed him without recognition. The Irish children in the street hooted after him, saluting him with the name Huldah bestowed—"Pizen Doctor."

At length he could bear it no longer; and I think few were sorry to hear, three months after the death of our beloved pastor, that Dr. Sharpe had sold his place, and was going back to the city.

The day of his departure there was gathered about the depot a motley crowd, such as usually, in a country village, watches the coming in and going out of a train. In addition to those whose business called them there, there was a plentiful sprinkling of seminary girls, loafers, and idle boys, lounging about. The doctor stood on the platform, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the train. While his neighbors and acquaintances chatted familiarly together in groups, he stood moodily apart,

THE FAMILY DOCTOR.

neglected and shunned. As the train came in sight, wheeling majestically round a curve in the road, a tall woman, bent with age and infirmity, pushed her way through the crowd. She carried a basket on her arm, and an old leather-bound book was open in her hand. She tottered, rather than walked, to that part of the platform where Dr. Sharpe stood the crowd making way for her as she advanced. Then, setting down her basket, and drawing herself to her full height, she pointed at him with her skinny finger, and cried out in a voice that, cracked and broken as it was, rose high above the shriek of the approaching engine,—

"He made a pit," she screamed, "and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made."

"His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate."

She took up her basket, and disappeared as she came. There was a hush, and then some

in the crowd cried out, "Three groans for Dr. Sharpe!" The proposal was received with loud acclamations, and amid hisses, and cries, and execrations, the "whiskey doctor" finished his professional career in our village.

The next morning, soon after sunrise, the sexton went up to the cemetery to dig a grave. As he passed the Barry lot, he saw a woman lying face downward upon one of the graves. There was a heavy frost upon the ground, and it covered the prostrate form as with a mantle. It shone upon an immense black bonnet she wore, glistened in a stray lock of matted gray hair, and lay thick upon her outstretched arm, which crept round the marble head-stone, and held it in a firm embrace. He gently lifted the heavy head, and turned her face to the bright morning sky. She was dead. An overturned basket lay beside her, to which a few withered herbs were clinging; and at a little distance on the ground lay an old leather-bound Bible and the fragments of a black bottle.

THE END.

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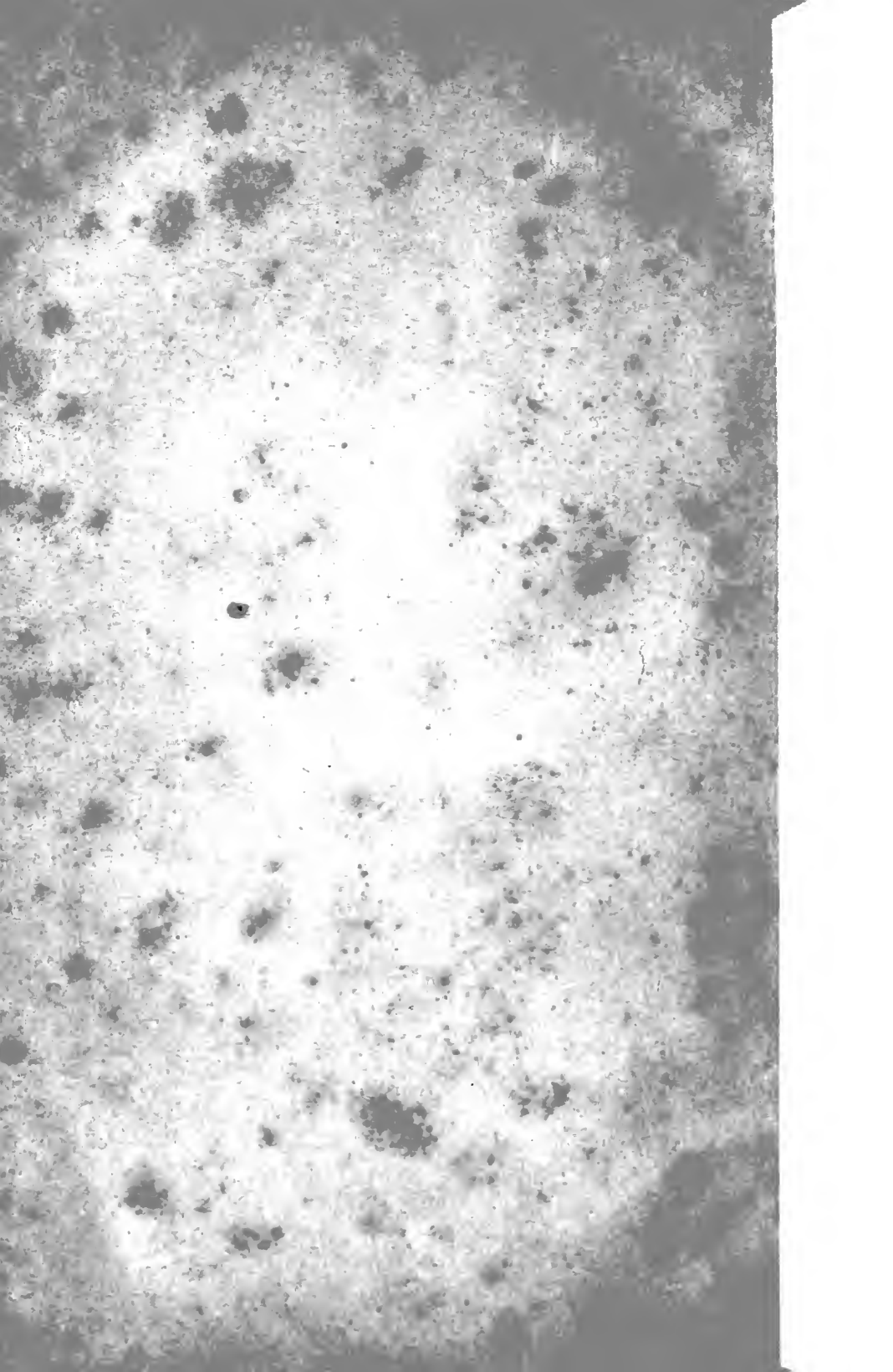
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